Abu Hanifa's High Rank in Hadith

by
Shaykh Muhammed Abd Al-Rasheed Al-Noomani

Edited by
Shaykh Abdulfattah Abu Ghuddah

Translation
Dr. Sadi Kose

Abu Hanifa's High Rank in Hadith
(Makaanat Al-Imaam Abi Hanifa Fi Al-Hadeeth)

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About the Translation

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

Dear Reader,

I tried to stay faithful to the original text as much as possible. Whenever a literal translation did not make sense or transmit the meaning in English, I paraphrased. Sometimes, I used square braces [] to express the implied meaning. Since the contents of the square braces are my interpretations, I worded the sentences such that they could be read without them.

The author, Al-Shaykh Muhammed Abd Al-Rasheed Al-No'maani, is a Hadith expert and he included chains of transmissions with narrations. The chains of transmission don't present a difficulty in Arabic, as Arabs are familiar with the names and titles. For English speakers however, I thought that reading a long series of foreign names could result in boredom and confusion, so I moved the chain of transmition for each narration to the footnotes for the reader who is interested.

Due to the nature of the subject of this book, the author used a lot of technical Arabic vocabulary from Hadith Science. I tried to use the corresponding English words used in academic literature as much as I could. Fearing that the ordinary reader may not be familiar with the less common English usage, I also included the transliteration of the original Arabic word in the footnotes. I preferred footnotes over parenthetical expression to help reduce clutter for the reader.

The author refers to many books that are not translated into English. For these books, I transliterated the title and sometimes shortened it, and moved the full name to the footnote. For the books with an English translation that I am aware of, I always provided the full English title.

At the end of the book there is a short glossary that provides definitions for a few words or acronyms.

These are some of the choices that I made for the first edition but I am interested in hearing from you, the reader, about your preferences. I will try to incorporate them to the extent possible in the subsequent editions God willing.

May Allah accept it from me and make it heavy on the scale in Day of Judgment and may He make it a means by which truth be known. All praise is due to Allah and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our master prophet Muhammed, upon his family, and his companions. Ameen!

Dr. Sadi Kose
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United States

Preface

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, the Patron of the pious and the righteous. May the most complete and enduring prayers and blessings be upon the Messenger of guidance and the Imaam of the pious who is sent as a mercy to the worlds, and upon his family, his companions, and his beneficent followers until the Day of Judgement. Ameen!

This is a beneficial, precious, glorious unique book titled "Abu Hanifa's High Rank in Hadith"written by the late Muhammed Abd Al-Rahseed Al-No'maani (may Allah protect him[1]) who was a great investigative scholar, critic, and Hadith Master. He held the post of Grand Shaykh of Hadith and its sciences at the University of Al-Uloom Al-Islamiyyah in Karachi, Pakistan. This school was founded by our teacher, magnificent scholar, Hadith Master, jurist of applied and theoretical law, Al-Mahasin Al-Sayyid Muhammed Yusuf Al-Husayny Al-Bannoory - may Allah have mercy on him.

This edition [of the book] is distinguished from former editions in that it was read to the author (may Allah have mercy on him) and he took the time to make some minor changes. He also added a significant amount of important new material. The author, may Allah have mercy on him, spared no effort in collecting many jewels for this book.

Besides the followers of Abu Hanifa, quite a few jurists, Hadith Masters and historians wrote books to eliminate the confusion that some fanatics have stirred up regarding the stature of Imaam Abu Hanifa (may Allah be pleased with him). Among these great scholars, are the great Imaam, jurist and Hadith Master of North-West Africa, Abu Amr bin Abdulbarr (follower of Maliki school), the great Imaam, Hadith master and critic Shams Al-Deen Al-Dhahabi (follower of Shafii school), the great Imaam, jurist and Hadith Master Yusuf bin Hasan bin Abd Al-Haadi Al-Dimashqi Al-Saalihy (follower of Hanbali school) who is more commonly known as ibn Al-Mibrad who died in the year 909[2]. [In addition to those just mentioned,] the great Imaam and the Hadith Master and critic Al-Suyooty (follower of Shafii school), the great Imaam Hadith Master and critic Muhammed bin Yusuf Al-Salihi (follower of Shafii school), the great Shafii Jurist Imaam Ibn Hajar Al-Haythami Al-Makki also wrote on this subject. They authored long books narrating the virtues and excellence of Imaam Abu Hanifa, stating his greatness and stature as an [Independent] Jurist. They defended the Imam against disgraceful and envious insulters.

Since the disease of the belittlement of the rank of Imaam Abu Hanifa in Hadith has become epidemic in some Arab countries[3] where [earnest] readers are seeking access to refutational publications like this in order to counter accusations of the [smear] campaign against the Imaam, we introduce this book to inform people about what the [true] masters of Hadith Science and Jurisprudence have to say about him. This work strives to serve as a lighthouse for those who seek guidance and as a reminder for those who are dreadful partisans. Verily Allah is the guide to the straight path and may the prayers and peace be upon our Prophet, Messenger and Master Muhammed and upon his family and companions, all of them. All praise is due to Allah the Lord of the worlds.

Abd Al-Fattah Abu Ghudda

1 Dhi Al-Qaada 1415, Riyadh

1 At the time Shaykh Abd Al-Fattah Abu Ghudda was preparing this book for publication in the Middle East, the author was alive, but now both the author and the editor passed away. We ask Allah to cover them both in His mercy and turn their graves into a garden of Paradise. Ameen! [Tr]

2 The dates in this book are based on the Islamic Hijri calendar unless otherwise noted.

3 The said disease is spreading rapidly among the Anglophones and hence we decided to make this brilliant work available to the English speaking Muslims. May Allah accept it from us and make it beneficial for those seeking the truth. Ameen! [Tr.]

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Mercyful

All praise is due to Allah and the good end is only for the pious. No offence against anyone save the wrong-doers. May the prayers and peace be upon Muhammed, the Master of all Messengers and Prophets, the Seal of all, and upon his taintless family, benevolent companions and upon the rest of the Imaams from among the Independent Jurists, Judges, Hadith masters and critics especially upon our Imaam Abu Hanifa who was the first of the Independent Jurists[4] whose school is followed[5] to this day [by more than half of the Muslim world].

Among the crystal clear truths is that the Muslim nation had consensus [for twelve centuries] regarding the guidance and knowledge of the four Eponyms[6] starting with Imaam Abu Hanifa. Their virtues and knowledge and teaching in accordance with the Book of Allah and tradition of His Messenger came down through a multitude of channels such that it reached an undeniable consensus. Allah made them like the stars in the sky serving as guides for every believer seeking to be guided and serving as leaders for every hermit dedicated to worship. Thus, they deserve that we hold them in high esteem and honor for their multitudes of on-going favors upon us in all aspects of our [spiritual and social] lives.

The four Eponyms and others from among the early scholars including those among the followers[7] specializing in Hadith or Jurisprudence or the theoreticians of the applied law[8] should only be remembered in a respectful manner. Whosoever mentions them maliciously has taken a path contrary to that of [the majority of] Muslims as it is evidenced in the Quran, the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh) and the recordings of the eminent scholars of the Muslim nations.

Despite all of this, there has arisen in recent times a movement ignorant of its rights and [negligent of its] responsibilities. This movement fabricates utterly baseless lies against [scholars in general and] the four Eponyms [in particular]. They [foolishly] belittle the scholars and exalt themselves by considering themselves to be just as or more qualified than the learned Imaams. In particular, Imaam Abu Hanifa has been the subject of a fierce campaign of defamation when in fact he is innocent of all allegations and charges. [The blessings and acceptance of his work is evident by the fact that more than half of the Muslim nation is worshipping the Almighty according to his school of thought.] Even though Abu Hanifa is an Eponym, who has the unequivocal consensus of the ummah, there are devious ignorant people who disseminate vicious falsehood and slanders about his faith[9], his religion and his understanding of the applied law[10]. Many [other qualified] scholars, anterior[11] and posterior[12], have proven these charges to be no more than filthy fabrications and have cautioned people to be on guard and not pay attention to them. Nevertheless, the disseminators of falsehood did not take heed. Others are busy snatching minority opinions from the books of criticism and approval[13] [and disseminating them as if they are the majority view]. These minority opinions are faulty in more than one way and intertwined with deceptions such that [according to the sub-branch of Hadith science called Criticism and Approval] they don't even qualify as proper evidence for criticism. The slanderers cling to these minority opinions and defame the magnificent Imam. Are they ignorant of all of the praises of the early Hadith Masters [The ones who actually knew Abu Hanifa and witnessed his abilities and trustworthiness first hand such as such as Yahya bin Maeen]? The aforementioned scholars [who wrote about Abu Hanifa] constitute the pillars of the Science of Criticism and Approval[14] and in their hand is the banner of this science. The wrongdoers pretend to have forgotten that the posterior Hadith masters unanimously agree that these sorts of faulty slanderous defamatory opinions are of no value and must be dismissed altogether. They seem to also have ignored or forgotten that these very experts praise, revere and exalt Abu Hanifa.

As a denunciation for the obstinate transgressors, and as a clemency for the confused or feebleminded, I wanted to assemble the praises [of both the early and late scholars] of Abu Hanifa, (may Allah be pleased with him) and specifically mention his high status in the science of Hadith and Sunnah and to clarify [for the reader] the sublime and lofty rank that he has [according to the experts]. May Allah guide by it those whom are lost and deviated from truth in order for them not to be perished with those deceivers that are destined to perish.

4 mujtahid mutlaq
5 matboo'
6 See Glosary!
7 tabe'een
8 ahl al-nadzar
9 imaan
10 fiqh
11 mutaqaddimeen
12 mtakhkhireen
13 Al-jar wa al-ta'deel
14 al-jarh wa al-tadeel

The virtues and excellent characteristics of this Imaam are many. They were recorded by groups of both early and late scholars in dedicated books, series and biographical collections. However, most of these books are not accessible to the everyday reader. The material gathered in this book is a peek into the grand list of Abu Hanifa's virtues and excellent characteristics.

What is made available in this edition is not all that I wanted to mention in this book. Rather I am making available what I am able to gather thus far. I ask Allah to enable me to complete it in accordance with what would be pleasing to him. May He be pleased with all the Guiding Imaams. May He reward them [for our sake in the life to come] for their tremendous favor upon us. I ask Him, the Exalted in Might, humbly to accept this work from me and save it for my hereafter for verily He is the best to place hope in and He is able to grant [my request]. All praise be to Allah at the beginning and at the end. May the prayers and peace be upon our master Muhammed, the seal of the Prophets, and upon his family, companions and those closest to him in the Day of Judgment.

Muhammed Abd Al-Rasheed Al-No'mamni

20 Shaban 1415

Karachi, Pakistan

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah the Lord of the worlds. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our master Muhammed, and upon his family and his companions, all of them.

This is what I have collected with respect to the [lofty] stature of Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) in Hadith science. I ask Allah to make it a means by which the doubts, that his enemies are spreading regarding his retentiveness, authenticity and trustworthiness in Hadith, are eliminated. I ask Allah to make this work well received and make it a reason for forgiveness of my sins. He is well capable to do all this.

Imaam Abu Hanifa was one of the Scholars of the [entire Muslim] world in applied law[15], knowledge, piety, retentiveness and accuracy [in transmitting Hadith]. He was among the best of the generous, wise, brilliant people in addition to his steadfast worship, constant night prayer, and frequent recitation [of the Holy Qur'an].

He not only travelled vastly to collect Hadith but was also among those who were dedicated to learning the Book of Allah, the Sunnah, and Hadith science. He was among the fierce defenders of the prophetic tradition. He subdued some of the opponents of the Sunnah and [always] preferred Sunnah over others. He was the first to seek out the Hadith narrated by the trustworthy narrators and leave out the hadith of the weak narrators. He spent long years studying Hadith and applied law accompanied by piety and worship and he became a magnet for those who sought learning from around the Muslim world.

The news about his rank in knowledge, ability to memorize and excellence in whatever he does, his incessant struggle in gaining knowledge, understanding the religion and spreading it, avoiding any association with the government, self-sacrifices in disseminating knowledge, his generosity, how little he ran after this world and ephemeral temptations found therein, keeping up with supererogatory worship, and the many good that he championed is more than we can enumerate and more famous than we can publicize here.

The Muslim nation has unanimous consensus regarding his position as one of the Eponyms, his majestic lofty stature [as a man of knowledge], his [near] perfect virtues. The testimonies of the righteous predecessors regarding his praise, his piety, his renunciation of the ephemeral pleasures of this world, his worship, his dodging the governors and refusing to be appointed as a judge by the rulers [in order not to become a tool in their hands], abundance of his knowledge and abundance of his Hadith collection, his extraordinary ability in applied law and [strict] following of the Sunnah are plentiful. In addition, the history books and biography series are filled with statements from the most famous scholars among his contemporaries regarding his eminence from around the [Muslim] world and we see no need to repeat all of that here.

Abu Hanifa's Interest in Learning Hadith

The scholars of the textual criticism of Hadith and the giants of this science bore witness that Abu Hanifa had deep interest in Hadith and he undertook [many difficult] trips for seeking to acquire more Hadith and study them.

The great Hadith master Al-Dhahabi says in this biographical encyclopedia called *Siyar A'laam Al-Nubelaa*: "He [Abu Hanifa] had [deep] interested in acquiring Hadith and travelled [far and wide] for this purpose"[16]

He also says: "Verily Imaam Abu Hanifa sought Hadith especially in the year 100 and after"[17]

He said, regarding Abu Hanifa's teachers, in his book called *Manaaqib Abi Hanifa* which is dedicated to the virtues of the Imaam: "He[Abu Hanifa] took Hadith from Ataa bin Abi Rabaah in Mecca and he said [regarding his teacher]: I did not see anyone [as a teacher] better than Ataa[18]"

Al-Dhahabi also said: "In fact, Ataa used to prefer Abu Hanifa over his other students. Whenever Abu Hanifa joined the study circle, Ataa would ask other student to make a space for Abu Hanifa close to him as we will see later."

Imaam Al-Dhahabi said in his *Duwal Al-Islam*: "His most famous teacher is Ataa bin Abi Rabaah and as for the applied law[19], his [most renowned] teacher is Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman"[20]

The Hadith master Abu Bakr Al-Khateeb says in his *Taarikh Baghdaad*: "Said bin Saalim Al-Basri[21] said that

15 fiqh

16 Vol 6/392 3rd Edition Beirut 1405

17 Vol 6/396

18 "Manaqib Aby Hanifa wa Sahibayhi" page 11, Printed in Egypt

19 fiqh

20 Vol 1/79 Printed in Hyderabad in the year 1337 by Daaira Al-Maaarif Al-Nidzaamiyya

21 In order to keep the text simpler, I took the approach to record the chain of transmitters of the narrations in the footnote. For the majority of the English reader may not be accustomed to reading series of foreign names after one another even though in the original Arabic it flows naturally [Tr]. Here is the full chain for the above narration:

he heard Abu Hanifa say: "I met Ataa in Mecca and asked him about something and he said: Where are you from? I said from Kufa. He said: You are of a people who left their religion and became sects? I said: Yes. He said: Which group do you belong to? I said: To a group that doesn't insult the righteous predecessors, believes in Divine determination[22] and doesn't declare anyone a disbeliever due to a sin. He said to me: You know the truth stick to it."[23]

Al-Khateeb's teacher, jurist, Hadith scholar and judge by the name of Abu Abdullah Al-Husayni bin Ali Al-Misri said in his book *Akhbar Aby Hanifa wa Ashabihi*: "Al-Haarith bin Abd Al-Rahman[24] said: We would be [sitting] in front of [our teacher] Ataa in rows, whenever Abu Hanifa used to enter, he would ask a path to be open so that Abu Hanifa can sit by the teacher."[25]

The treatment of Abu Hanifa by Ataa in this manner indicates that he was among the most notable students of his in Hadith. Imaam Abd Al-Wahhab Al-Shaarani mentioned in his book *Al-Meezan Al-Kubra* the shortest path of chain of transmission of Hadith for Abu Hanifa is "Abu Hanifa from Ataa from Ibn Abbas" just as he mentions the chain of Imaam Malik as "from Nafii from Ibn Omar" when he talks about the chain of transitions of the Eponyms, the Book of Allah and the tradition of His Messenger (pbuh).

In the same way, his teacher in applied law[26] use to have Abu Hanifa sit next to him. The Hadith master Abu Bakr Al-Khateeb said in his *Tarikh Baghdaad*: "Zufar bin Huzayl[27] said: I heard Abu Hanifa say: I used to study Theology[28] and I reached a level whereby I became a reference. [One day] we were sitting [in the Masjid] close to the study circle of Hammad bin Aby Sulaiman and a woman came by and said: A man has a wife who is slave and wants to divorce her, how does he do it according to Sunnah? I did not know what to say. I asked her to ask Hammad and to come and inform me of Hammad's answer. She came and told me that [Hammad said] "He divorces her when she finishes her period before having any intercourse with her. Then, once she goes through two [more] periods and takes a ritual bath, she is permitted to marry [anyone she wishes]." Upon hearing this, I told myself that I don't need Theology. I took my shoes and set in the study circle of Hammad. I used to listen to his verdicts and memorize them such that I was able to reproduce them the following day. I was accurate in my recollection while his senior students used to make mistakes. Finally he said [one day] that no one is to sit by him except me"[29]

This anecdote is proof of his sharp, strong memory and his ability to accurately retain and deliver information orally.

Hadith Master Abu Bakr Al-Khateeb says in his *Taarikhu Baghdaad*: "Abu Mutii' said[30] : Abu Hanifa said: I went to [visit] the Caliph Abu Jaafar and he said: "O Abu Hanifa, from whom did you take your knowledge? I said: from Omar bin Al-Kattab (may Allah be pleased with him) via Ibrahim [Al-Nakhai] by way of Hammad [bin Abi Sulaiman], from Ali bin Abi Taalib, Abdullah bin Masoood and Abdullah bin Omar (may Allah be pleased with them all). Abu Jafar said: Bravo! You have taken it from the most dependable sources. You have taken from the benevolent, taintless blessed people (may Allah have mercy on them all)." The version you have just read is what is found in the published edition of Al-Khateeb's book. The correct version states that Ibrahim [Al-Nakhaii] took the knowledge from the companions of Omar [since Ibraheem is not known to have taken from Omar directly.] This was pointed out by the late great Scholar [Muhammed Zahid] Al-Kawthari in his *Al-Taaneeb*[31].

Imaam Abu Hanifa, in fact, surpassed his contemporaries in acquiring Hadith. The Hadith master Al-Dhahabi says in his *Manaqeeb Abi Hanifa* on the authority of Imaam Misar bin Kidaam who said "I studied hadith along with Abu Hanifa, he surpassed us (his classmates), we turned to solitude[32] he excelled [more than anyone of us], we turned to applied law and [there is where his star really shined] as you see [the fruits of his labor]."[33]

Al-Dhahabi mentions Misar bin Kidam in his *Tadhkirat Al-Huffadz*. [Meaning he is considered to be among the Hadith Masters]. The same author gives him the lofty title of "The Scholar of Iraq and trustworthy, reliable

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The Hadith master Abu Nuaym informed us that Abu Bakr Abdullah bin Yahya Al-Talhi reported that Othman bin Ubaydillah Al-Talhi reported that Ismaeel bin Muhammed Al-Talhi informed us that Said bin Saalim Al-Basri said…

22 qadar

23 Vol 13/331

24 Abdullah bin Muhammed informed us that Mukarram reported that Abdussamad bin Ubaydillah bin Muhammed bin Nooh said that Hafs bin Yahya reported that Mhammed bin Aabaan said on the authority of Al-Haarith bin Abd Al-Rahman who said…

25 Page 83 Printed in Haydarabad Al-Dakn in India in the year 1394

26 fiqh

27 Al-Khallal informed us that Al-Hariry reported that Al-Nakhai said that Jafar bin Muhammed bin Nazim informed him that Al-Waleed bin Hammaad told them on the authority of Hasan bin Ziyaad on the authority of Zufar bin Huzayl said…

28 al-kalaam

29 Vol 13/332-333

30 Muhammed bin Abd Al-Malik Al-Qureshi informed me that Abu Al-Abbas Ahmad bin Muhammed bin Al-Husayn Al-Razy relates that Ali bin Ahmad Al-Qaari narrated that Muhammed bin Al-Fadl, who is also known as Al-Balkhy Al-Abid narrated that Abu Mutii' said …

31 Taneeb Al-Khateeb, Page 29

32 zuhd

33 Page 28

Hadith Master" in his book *Siyar A'laam Al-nubelaa*.

Sadr Al-Aimmah Al-Makky says:" Misar bin Kidaam was a source of pride for Kufa in his mastery of Hadith, and in his focus on worship and the hereafter and was one of the teachers of Abu Hanifa who narrates from him in his *Musnad*[34]"

Scholarship of Abu Hanifa in Hadith

The scholars in the past and present bore witness to the scholarship of Imaam Abu Hanifa in Hadith. The [renowned] Hadith master of North Africa, Abu Omar Yusuf bin Abdulbarr Al-Namari Al-Qurtobi Al-Andulusi (may Allah have mercy on his soul) said in his famous book called *Jaami' bayan al-ilmi*[35]: " Abu Dawood Suleiman bin Al-Ashas Al-Sijistani[36] said: May Allah have mercy on [Imaam] Malik who was a great scholar, may Allah have mercy on [Imaam] Al-Shafii who was a great scholar and may Allah have mercy on [Imaam] Abu Hanifa who was a great scholar[37]"

He also said in a book [dedicated to the three Imaams] called *Al-Intiqaa*[38]: "Abu Dawood Suleiman bin Ashas bin Ishaaq Al-Sijistani[39] (may Allah have mercy on his soul) said: "May Allah have mercy on [Imaam] Malik who was a great scholar, may Allah have mercy on [Imaam] Al-Shafii who was a great scholar and may Allah have mercy on [Imaam] Abu Hanifa who was a great scholar[40]"

What you have just read is the testimony of the teacher of the Hadith masters and [one of] the [most renowned and trustworthy] scholars of the Hadith science, Abu Dawood Al-Azdi Al-Sijistani, who is the author of [the famous Hadith collection called] Al-Sunan, regarding the rank of the three Eponyms and their status in Hadith science.

The [great] Scholar and Hadith Master, Sheik of Khorasan, Abu Bakr Ahmad bin Hasan Al-Bayhaqi (may Allah have mercy on his soul) explains in great depth and breadth the meaning of the above statement of Abu Dawood and the meaning of "Eponym" in the introduction of his book called *Delail Al-nubuwwah*[41] [42]

Here is what he says:

> "Section: What deserves to be known and understood in this section is that you must recognize that Allah sent His Messenger (pbuh) in truth and sent down upon him His book the Holy Qur'an guaranteeing its preservation when He says: "Verily it Us who sent down the Qur'an and it is up to Us to preserve it[43]". He commissioned His Messenger to explain His religion and Book as He says "We have revealed to you the reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that hopefully they may reflect.[44]" He employed His Messenger [for a period of 23 years] to explain to his nation what he was sent with. By the time he (pbuh) passed away, he made everything very clear. Furthermore, any new issue that may arise in the future among the members of the [ever-growing] Muslim nation would be dealt with either explicitly or implicitly in the Book of Allah or in the tradition of His Messenger (pbuh). In addition, He sends in every century [great] scholars who undertake explaining the divine law and guarding it for the Muslim nation. They also refute anything that is not of the religion [keeping it pure]."
>
> Ibrahim bin Abd Al-Rahmaan Al-Udhri[45] said that Messenger of Allah said: "The knowledge of this religion is inherited from generation to generation by the [most] trustworthy ones who protect it against the distortions of every extremist and against corruption of liars and against the misinterpretations of incipient fools."
>
> This was also narrated by Al-Waleed bin Muslim from Ibrahim bin Abd Al-Rahmaan from their trust-

34 From the book called "Manaaqib Al-imaam Al-Aa'dzam" by Sadr Al-Aimmah Al-Muwaffaq Vol 2/37 Printed by daairat Al-maarif in Hydarabad Al-dakn in India

35 Jaami' bayan al-ilmi wa fadlihi wa ma yanbaghi fi riwayatihi wa hamlihi

36 Abdullah bin Muhammed bin Yususf informed us that Ibn Rahmoon said: I head Muhammed bin Bakr bin Dase say: I hear Abu Davood Sulaiman bin Al-ashas Al-Sijistani say…

37 Vol 2/163, Printed by Idaarat Al-tab' Al-muneera in Egypt

38 The full name of the book is: Al-Intiqaa fi fadaili Al-thalatha Al-fuqaha, Malik, Shafii wa Abu Hanifa, radiya Allahu Anhom, wa dhikru uyunin min akhbaarihim wa akhbaari ashabihim li-altaarifi bi jalalati aqdarihim

39 Abdullah bin Muhammed bin Abd Al-Mumin bin Yahya (may Allah have mercy on his soul) said that Abu Bakr Muhammed bin Abd Al-Razzaq Al-Tamar, who is most commonly known as Ibn Dasah, narrated that Abu Davood Sulaiman bin Ashas bin Ishaq Al-Sijistani (may Allah have mercy on his soul) said…

40 Page 232. I (Al-Shaykh Abd Al-Fattah Abu Ghudda) prepared this book for print in Cairo in the year 1350 and it was published by Maktabat Al-Qudsy

41 Delail al-nubuwwah Wa Ma'rifati Ahwali Sahib Al-Sharia

42 Vol 1/34-3 First print of Beirut in the year 1405

43 Surah Al-Hijr Verse 9

44 Surah Al-Nahl Verse 44

45 Abu Sa'd Ahmad bin Muhammed Al-Soufi said the Hadith master Ahmad bin Adi informed us that Abdullah bin Muhammed bin Abd Al-Azeez narrated that Abu Al-Rabii' Al-zahrani narrated that Muan bin Rifaa narrates on the authority of Ibrahim bin Abd Al-Rahmaan Al-Udzri who said…

worthy teachers from the Messenger (pbuh) of Allah.

This statement has been proven true repeatedly in the era of the Companions and every century thereafter. Some of them undertook recording the biographies of the narrators of the prophetic tradition and classifying them based on the science of criticism and approval[46] as reliable, trustworthy, questionable and the like. Having all of this information recorded and classified made it possible for later generations [to have easy access to such invaluable body of information]. In addition to the Hadith Scholars, jurists[47] also got involved in the science of criticism and approval.

Mahmood bin Ghaylan Al-Marwazi[48] said: Al-Himmani informed me from Abu Hanifa who said "I never saw worse liar than Jabir Al-Ju'fy nor a better [teacher] than Ataa""

He said that Abd Al-Hameed Al-Himmani narrated saying I heard Abu Said Al-Saghani stood up in the presence of Abu Hanifa and said: O Abu Hanifa, what do you say about taking Hadith from [the Imaam Sufyaan] Al-Thawri? He said: Write his [narrations of the] Hadith for verily he is trustworthy with the exception of those Hadith that Abu Ishaaq narrates from Al-Haarith and those of Jaabir Al-Ju'fi.

Yahya bin Said Al-Qattaan[49] said: I asked Shuba, Sufyaan Al-Thawri, Malik bin Anas, Sufyan bin Uyayna regarding a narrator who is accused and indicted in Hadith and he is unable to memorize. They said: Make his information public so that everyone knows how unreliable his narrations are.

Bakr bin Hallad[50]said: Yahya bin Said Al-Qattaan was once asked: Don't you fear that those whose Hadith you [deemed doubtful and] left out will be your contender in the Day of Judgment before the Almighty? [He said:] I would rather have them as contender in the hereafter instead of the Messenger of Allah who would say to me: Why did you narrate what should have been recognized to be a fabrication, as part of my tradition?

Harmala bin Yahya[51] said : I heard Al-Shafii (may Allah have mercy on him) say: Had it not been for Shuba, Hadith would have been unknown in Iraq as he used to come up to [doubtful] narrators of Hadith and say: Don't go on narrating Hadith otherwise I will tell on you to the Rulers."

Such were their struggle to guard the Sunnah. There are many more examples that one can site however [for those seeking the truth] what has been selected should be sufficient"

A similar statement has been made by the great Hadith Master Abu Isa Muhammed bin Isa bin Sawra Al-Sulami Al-Tirmidhi (may Allah have mercy on his soul) in his *Kitaab Al-ilal* from his collection [of Hadith[52]]": "Some people [in our day], who lack understanding, blame experts of the Hadith science for practicing the sub branch called criticism[53]. We find that the eminent scholars among the followers[54] were involved in the criticism of the narrators such as Al-Hasan Al-Basri and Tawoos who were critical of Ma'bad Al-Juhani. Sa'd bin Jubayr was critical of Talq bin Habeeb and Ibrahim Al-Nakhai and Aamir Al-Sha'bi were critical of Al-Harith Al-A'war.

Similar statements [regarding critical examination of narrators] have been attributed to Ayyoob Al-Sakhtiyani, Abdullah bin Awn, Suleiman Al-Taymi, Su'ba bin Al-Hajjaaj, Sufyaan Al-Thawri, Malik bin Anas, Al-Awzai, Abdullah bin Mubarak, Yahya bin Said Al-Qattaan, Waki' bin Jarrah, Abdurrahman bin Mahdi and others among the scholars who critically examined the Hadith narrators and in some instances they declared them weak.

What derived those scholars to do this, Allah knows best, is to warn the Muslims about the weakness found in some narrators. Some were practicing innovators [who could make up potentially a Hadith to legitimize or support his innovations]. There were others who were accused in their narrations [of their inability to retain the text and transmit it accurately and with precision]. Some of them were heedless making plenty of mistakes. Otherwise, it is unfathomable that those scholars from the blessed generation of followers would be after defamation and backbiting in their practice of criticism of the narrators. Rather, these scholars wanted to publicize the characteristics and classifications of the narrators solely for the sake of preserving the religion and [without leaving it to the mercy of the narrators to corrupt the Hadith either unintentionally or intentionally]. The narrators, in fact, are witnesses. [In our day to day affairs we scrutinize the witnesses in the court since we are after the truth.] Well, the

46 al-jarh wa al-ta'deel

47 fuqahaa

48 Abu Abd Al-Rahman Muhammed bin Al-Husayn Al-Sulami informed us that Abu Said Al-Khallal narrated that Abu Al-Qasim Al-Baghawi reported that Mahmood bin Ghaylan Al-Marwazi said…

49 Abu Al-Hasan bin Al-Fadl Al-Qattan informed us in Baghdaa saying Ahmed ibn Sulaiman narrated that Jafar bin Muhammed Al-Saai' reported that Affaan said to me: Yahya bin Said Al-Qattaan told me saying…

50 Abu Ali Al-Husayn bin Muhammed Al-Ruwdhabari narrated that Abu Bakr Ahmad bin Kamil bin Half Al-Qaadi reported that Abu Said Al-Harawi related on the authority of Bakr bin Hallad who said…

51 Abu Abdullah Al-Haafidz informed us saying Abu Al-Waleed Al-Faqeeh narrated that Al-Hasan bin Sufyan reported that Harmala bin Yahya said…

52 Vol 13/305-309 with aridat al-ahwadhi, Printed in Egypt in the year 1352

53 al-jarh

54 tabeen

witnesses of the religious text should be scrutinized and verified even more thoroughly [since the false testimony of the latter will mislead the entire Muslim nation whereas the former will harm an individual or a group of individuals]. [Imaam Al-Trimidhi] lists many more quotes from the experts of this science [of Hadith] regarding the criticism of many of the narrators and then he says:

Mahmood bin Ghaylaan informed us that Abu Yahya Al-Himmani reported saying "I heard Abu Hanifa say: I have never seen a bigger liar than Jabir Al-Ju'fi nor a better [narrator] then Ataa bin Aby Rabaah"

The teacher of Imaam Al-Bayhaqi, the eminent Hadith Master and the Teacher of Hadith Masters, Abu Abdullah Al- Al-Hakim, who is known also as Ibn Al-Bayyi, says in his famous book *Almustadrak ala Al-saheehayn* when he reports the various chains of transmission of the hadith "There is no marriage [for a lady] except with [the consent of her] guardian":

A group of eminent scholars, besides what has already been mentioned, narrate this Hadith on the authority of Abu Ishaaq [with a connected chain]. Among them are, Abu Hanifa Al-Nooman bin Thabit, Raqaba bin Masqala Al-Abdi, Mutarrif bin Tariff Al-Harithi, Abdulhameed bin Hasan Al-Hilaali, Zakariyya bin Aby Zaida and others that we had mentioned in [this] section.

[The Eminent Hadith Master] Al-Haakim says in his book *Ma'rifati uloom Al-hadith*[55]:

The 49th category: [In this category we have] the renowned trustworthy Scholars from the followers[56] and their students[57]. Among them are those whose narrations are to be collected, memorized and preserved for consultation and for the blessings found therein. They should be remembered and mentioned throughout from East to West. He [Al-Haakim] mentions number of eminent ones among them saying:

- From the people of Medina, we have Muhammed bin Muslim Al-Zuhri, Muhammed bin Munkadir Al-Qurashi, Rabia bin Abi Abd Al-Rahmaan Al-Raai, Malik bin Anas Al-Asbahi, Jafar bin Muhammed Al-Saadiq and others.
- From the people of Mecca, we have Mujaahid bin Jabir, Amr bin Dinar, Abd Al-Malik bin Jurayj, Fudayl bin Iyaad and others.
- From Egypt we have, Amr bin Al-Haarith, Yazeed bin Aby Habeeb, Haywa bin Shareeh Al-Tujeebi and others.
- From greater Syria[58] we have, Abd Al-Rahmaan bin Amr Al-Awjagi, Shuayb bin Abi Hamza Al-Hamsy, Makhool the Jurist and others.
- From Yemen we have, Tawoos, Abdullah bin Tawoos, and others.
- From Al-Yamaama [region], we have Yahya bin Aby Katheer and others.
- From Kufa [in Iraq] we have, Amr bin Sharaahil Al-Shabi, Said bin Jubayr Al-Asdi, Ibrahim Al-Nakhai[59], Abu Ishaaq Al-Sabii, Hammad bin Abi Suleiman[60], Mansoor bin Al-Mutamir, Mugheera bin Miqsam Al-Dabbii, Al-A'amash Al-Asdi, Misar bin Kidaam Al-Hilaali, **Abu Hanifa Al-Nooman bin Thaabit Al-Taymi**, Sufyan bin Said Al-Thawri, Dawood bin Nusayr Al-Taai, Zufar bin Al-Huzayl[61], Aafiya bin Yazeed Al-Qaadi and others.
- From the Arabian Peninsula, we have Meymoon bin Mihraan, Amr bin Meymoon bin Mihraan, Khaleed bin Me'daan, who is known for his devout worship and others.
- From Basra [in Iraq] we have, Ayyoob bin Abi Tameema Al-Sakhtiyani, Su'ba bin Al-Hajjaaj, Hishaam bin Hassaan, Qataada bin Da'ama and others.
- From people of Waasit we have, Al-Awwaam bin Hawshab, Abu Khaalid Yazeed bin Abd Al-Rahmaan Al-Daalaani and others.
- From Khorasan we have, Ibraheem bin Tahmaan, who is known for his mastery of applied law and devout worship, Ibraheem bin Atham the hermite from Balkh, Shaqeeq bin Ibraheem the hermite, Al-Nasr bin Muhammed Al-Shaybaani and others. May Allah have mercy on all of them.

The great Scholar, Shaykh Al-Islam, Abu Al-Abbaas Taqiy Al-Deen Ahmad bin Abd Al-Haleem who is more

55 Pages 240-249, Printed in Cairo

56 tabe'een

57 atbai'him

58 The term Shaam refers to Damascus today however in the past it was used to refer to a region including present day Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. [Tr.]

59 Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman's most famous teacher in applied law (fiqh)

60 Abu Hanifa'a most famous teacher in applied law (fiqh)

61 One of the most renowned students of Abu Hanifa after Abu Yusuf Al-Qaadi and Muhammed bin Al-Hasan Al-Shaybani.

commonly known as Ibn Taymiyya Al-Hanbali said in his book *Minhaaj Al-sunnah*[62]: "Bashshaar bin Diraa'[63] said: "Abu Hanifa met Muhammed bin Nooman and said "From whom did you take the hadith returning of the sun[64]. He [Muhammed ibn Nooman] said: from other than those that you took the Hadith of [the address of Omar (ra) to his general Sariya where the former is giving a Friday sermon and the latter is leading an army against the enemy in Khorasan province (located mostly in present day Iran)] "O Sariya, the mountain!"

Ibn Taymiyya says that the above conversation indicates that the early scholars of Islam did not deem the hadith of returning of the sun[65] authentic since it was not narrated by any of the eminent scholars of Muslims. This is Abu Hanifa, one of the [most] renowned scholars and he can't be accused of being biased against Ali (ra) as he is from Kufa, the cradle of Shia, he heard from Shia scholars many virtues of Ali (ra), he loves Ali (ra). Despite all of this, he refutes the Hadith of Muhammed bin Noomaan. [It must be stated that] Abu Hanifa is more knowledgeable and more qualified in applied law than Al-Tahawi and the like [who declared this hadith authentic].

Ibn Al-Noomaan doesn't give a decent answer to Abu Hanifa's question. Instead, he dodges it by saying "from other than those that you took the Hadith of "O Sariya, the mountain!". One can say to Ibn Al-Nooman, wake up! That is a lie. What is there in that lie which can serve as evidence for the veracity of your claim? Abu Hanifa doesn't deny the fact that Both Omar and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both) and others could show extraordinary performance. Rather, he dismisses this Hadith due to numerous proofs that it is a lie including the fact that it contradicts the Divine law, sound intellect and none of the renowned scholars among the followers or those that came after them narrate it. If we have any statements from the Companions, it must come to us by way of the reliable, truthful and trustworthy narrators among the followers and their students. As for this Hadith, it was only narrated by pathologic liars or those who are unknown and we have nothing about them in the books of criticism and verification. How can the Hadith of such people be accepted? Other scholars of Islam wished that this Hadith were true and authentic due the fact that it contains a miracle of Muhammed (pbuh) and a virtue of Ali (ra) whom they love and respect however their honesty forces them to declare this Hadith as fabrication due to their piety and integrity. Allah knows best."

He [Ibn Taymiyya] says in a different place in the aforementioned book: [66]" …The eminent scholars of people of Hadith, of the Qur'anic commentators, of Sufism, of the applied law[67] like the four Eponyms and their followers…"

The Hadith master [and the legendary Qur'anic commentator] Abu Al-Fidaa bin Katheer Al-Dimashqi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his book *Al-Bidaya wa Al-nihaya*[68]: "Even though [Imaam Abu Jafar] Al-Tahaawi (ra) had confusion regarding the hadith "returning of the sun[69]" for Ali (RA), it has been narrated from Abu Hanifa that he rejected this hadith and was critical of its narrators. Abu Abbas bin Uqda said that Jafar bin Muhammed bin Umayr reported that Sulaiman bin Ubbad said: I heard Bashshar bin Dira' say: Abu Hanifa encountered Muhammed bin Nooman and said: From whom did you take the hadith of "returning of the sun"? Ibn Nooman said: from other than those that you took the Hadith of "O Sariya, the mountain!"

This is the Imaam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on his soul) being one of the great scholars can not be accused of lacking the love for Ali bin Abi Taalib (ra) and falling short in acknowledging the virtues that Allah SW bestowed upon him in addition to the Prophet's praises (pbuh) of him. Despite all of these, he refuses this hadith and refutes the claims of the narrators and other that it is authentic.

The response of Muhammed bin Nooman cannot be qualified as an answer but rather a vain and useless attempt to dodge the question. Instead, he wants to say, if this narration about the virtue of Ali (ra) that I report is strange [and anomalous], then your narration of "O Sariya, mountain!" about the virtue of Omar (ra) is just as odd and strange. This claim of Muhammed bin Nooman is totally unfounded because the two Hadith are not similar

62 Minhaaj Al-sunnah Al-nabawiyya fi naqdi kalaam Al-sheea wa Al-qadariyyah

63 Abu Al-Abbas bin Uqda said that Jafar bin Muhammed bin Amr narrated that Sulaiman bin Abbaad reported that he heard Bashshaar bin Diraa' say…

64 This refers to an incident during the time of the Prophet (pbuh) where [once] Ali (ra) was not able to pray Asr (late afternoon prayer) and the sun set. The messenger of Allah (pbuh) said "[O Allah] He [Ali] is obedient to You and to Your Messenger. Please bring back the sun [so he can pray Asr] and the sun came out again and set shortly thereafter". The Hadith Master Ahmad bin Hajar Al-Haytami states in his book "Al-Sawaiq Al-muhriqa Al-rad ala ahl-albida' wa Al-zindiqa" (on pages 178-179, printed by Maktabt Al-haqiqa in Istanbul): "[The famous Jurist and Hadith Master Imaam] Al-Tahaawi as well as [the eminent jurist] Al-Qadi Eyaad in his book Al-Shifaa had declared this Hadith authentic. Shaykh Al-islaam Abu Zur'ah declared it hasan (mediocre) and others followed him. There are some who considered this hadith fabricated (mawdoo'). [The seal of Hadith Masters Imaam] Al-Soyooty authored a book called "Kashf Al-Labs fi hadith rad Al-shams" wherein he followed all the chains of transmissions of this Hadith and concluded that this hadith is authentic. For more information, please refer to the aforementioned books. [Tr.]

65 rad al-shams

66 Vol 1/172-173

67 fiqh

68 Vol 6/85-86, First Print in the year 1966 by Maktabat Al-maarif in Beirut

69 rad al-shams

at all neither in terms [of the strength] of the chain of transmission nor in terms of the conformance of the text [to the Divine law]. How can he compare the extraordinary occurrence of communication of Omar (ra) with his general with the returning of the sun after it is set? The Messenger (pbuh) testified that Omar (ra) is inspired to speak the truth while the returning of the sun after setting is one of the major signs of the last day.

The [legendary] Hadith Master ibn Hajar [Al-Asqalani] says in his *Lisaan Al-Meezaan*[70]: "Muhammed bin Ali bin Al-Noomaan bin Abu Tareef Al-Bajali Al-Kufi Abu Ja'far who is surnamed "The Devil of Al-Taaq[71] " referring to the market of Taaq Al-Mahamil in Kufa where he used to sit to exchange money. It is said that he was first surnamed the devil of Al-Taaq by Abu Hanifa after a debate that took place in his presence between him and some of the Harooriya sect. There took place a debate between him and Abu Hanifa regarding the virtues of Ali (ra) in which he was called Muhammed bin Al-Noomaan[72] referring to his grandfather. [During this debate] Abu Hanifa asked him in a disapproving tone: From whom did you take the Hadith of returning of the sun[73]? From the same[74] person that you took the hadith of "O Sariya, Mountain!"

The Eminent Scholar, Imaam, trustworthy Hadith Master Shams Al-Deen Abu Abdullah Muhammed, who is more commonly known as Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya Al-Hanbali says in his *I'laam al-muwaqqi'een*[75]": "The four Eponyms and the [Master] Jurists, all of them, used and relied upon the pages that Amr bin Shuayb narrated from his father who narrated from his father [to draw rulings]. We know of no Master Jurists, including the four Eponyms, except that they needed those pages and relied upon what is in them. The only ones that disapproved of them are those that are unable to shoulder the burdens and responsibility of the applied law[76] and issuance of legal opinion such as Abu Haatim Al-Busty, Ibn Hazm and others"

In a different place[77] in the same book, he said "As for the method of the companions, the followers, the Hadith Masters such as [Imaam] Al-Shafii, Imaam Ahmad, [Imaam] Malik, [Imaam] **Abu Hanifa**, Abu Yususf, Al-Bukhaari and Ishaaq …"

The superlatives of learning, criticism and authentication such as Abu Dawood, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Haakim, Al-Bayhaqi, Ibn Abdulbarr, Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ibn Katheer accepted and declared that Abu Hanifa is one of the renowned Masters of Hadith whose words in criticism and approval are sought after and relied upon and whose authentication or whose identification of hidden flaws in the Hadith are like those of the other Hadith Masters and Critics.

The eminent Hadith masters and experts, anterior[78] and posterior[79], acknowledged Abu Hanifa's ingenuity and proficiency in Hadith science and his accuracy, precision, ability to memorize and retain the text [until the time of delivery] and his piety and devoutness in transmitting the prophetic traditions.

The Hadith Master, Abu Bakr Ahmad bin Ali Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdaadi says in his *Tarikh baghdaad*[80]: "Abdullah bin Dawood Al-Khuraybi said[81]: It is obligatory upon every Muslim to pray for Abu Hanifa in their [five daily] prayers for having preserved for them the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh) and the applied law[82]"

Al-Khuraybi, who narrates the above anecdote, is among the giants of the Hadith Masters as was mentioned by [Imaam] Al-Dhahabi in his *Tadhkirat Al-Huffadz*[83]. Al-Dhahabi calls him "The Paragon Hadith Master and Imaam". He relates from Wakee' [bin Al-Jarrah] who said "Looking at the face of Abdullah bin Dawood [Al-Khuraybi] is a worship".

Imaam Al-Dhahabi mentions that once Al-Khuraybi was told that Imaam Abu Hanifa changed his verdict on many issues [in his later years]. Al-Khurayby said: "It is but a sign of the broadening and extending of the knowledge of the jurist".

70 Vol 5/ 300-301

71 shaytaan al-taaq

72 Al-Noomaan is the name of his grandfather but here he was called Muhammed son of Al-Noomaan. His father was named Ali and so he would normally have been referred to as Muhammed son of Ali son of Al-Noomaan.

73 rad al-shams

74 Note that in the previous narrations, he said "from other than those you took", but here the statement reads "from the same person that you took". In order to make sure that this is not a misprint, I went back to "Lisaan Al-miizaan" and found that it says there "from the same person that you took" (First Print of Lisaan Al-miizaan in the year 1423 (2002) by Maktabat Al-matbooa Al-ialaamiyyah Vol 7/374-375 (#7209) [Tr.]

75 I'laam Al-muwaqqi'een an Rabb Al-Aalameen: Vol 1/30 Printed by Ashraf Al-mataabi' in Dehli in India in the year 1314

76 fiqh

77 1/359

78 mutaqaddimeen

79 mutaakhkhireen

80 13/344

81 Al-Jawhari informed us that Muhammed bin Imraan Al-Marzubaani narrated that Abd Al-Waahid bin Muhammed Al-Khasiibi related that Abu Muslim Al-Kaji Ibraheem bin Abd Allah reported that Muhammed bin Said Abu Abd Allah Al-Kaatib said I heard Abd Allah bin Dawood Al-Khuraybi say…

82 fiqh

83 1/338

This Paragon Imaam and Hadith Master describes [Imaam] Abu Hanifa as someone having broad knowledge and having preserved the Sunnah [of the Prophet (pbuh)].

Al-Khateeb narrates: "Al-Hasan bin Sulaiman[84] said in the interpretation of the Hadith "The Day of Judgment will not come until the knowledge emerges" that the knowledge in this Hadith refers to that of Abu Hanifa and his interpretation of Hadith.

The owner of the above statement, Al-Hasan bin Sulaiman, is one of the Hadith Masters whose biography is given by Al-Dhahabi in his Tazdkirat Al-huffadh85 as well as Siyar a'alaam Al-nubelaa86. He says in Siyar a'alaam al-Nubelaa: "This great Imaam Qubbayta87 and Haith Master Abu Ali Al-Hasan bin Sulaiman Al-Basri who was later settled in Egypt was described by Ibn Yunus as a Master of Hadith science."

The aforementioned Hadith master compliments Abu Hanifa and praises him for his knowledge, and his interpretations of the prophetic traditions as well as those of the companions and the followers.

Al-Khateeb says in his *Taarikh baghdaad*[88]: "Khalf bin Ayyoob[89] said: "Allah bestowed knowledge upon Muhammed (pbuh), then it was [partially] transferred to his companions then to the followers then it was received by Abu Hanifa and his students no matter how much some people might not like [to hear] it".

This statement of Khalf bin Ayyoob about Abu Hanifa is similar to what Ibn Hazm said about Muhammed bin Nasr Al-Marwazi. Al-Dhahabi says in the biography of Ibn Nasr Al-Marwazi in his book *Siyar a'alaam al-nubelaa*: "Abu Muhammed bin Hazm said in some of what he wrote: The most knowledgeable of all the people is the most knowledgeable in the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh), the one who is most precise in its narration, most encompassing in its meaning and interpretation, most up-to-date regarding its authenticity and what the scholars agreed upon and what they differed in. We do not know anyone who gathered in himself all of the above attributes after the companions except Muhammd bin Nasr Al-Marwazi. If someone were to say that there is not a saying of the Messanger or his companions except Al-Marwazi knows about it, wouldn't be too far from the truth.

Al-Dhahabi says that Ibn Hazm could not have claimed such comprehensiveness and broadness for the knowledge of Al-Marwazi unless and until he went through his books. Such claim can be made about Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbal and his peers or homologues. Allah knows best.

If Ibn Hazm's claim for Al-Marwazi and Al-Dhahabi's claim for Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbel is true, then Imaam Abu Hanifa would be entitled to such an honor [more than anyone] since he is the first of the Eponyms, he is the most knowledgeable, he has the most aptitude in the applied law[90] and preceded them all [such that he is the only follower[91] among the four Eponyms] (may Allah be please with him as well as his students) as was testified by Khalf bin Ayyoob who was the teacher of Ahmad bin Hanbal and Yahya bin Maeen. This testimony of truth of Khalf bin Ayyoob, who was a masterful pious scholar, can only come after intensive research on his part of the potency and proficiency of Abu Hanifa in the applied law as well as of his methodology. How can one testify otherwise [regarding Imaam Abu Hanifa and his School of thought]? His name became synonymous with applied law and recording of it in all four corners of the earth as was stated by Ibn Al-Nadeem in his book called *Al-Fihrist*[92]

One of the greatest of the scholars[93] who mastered the religious as well as secular sciences and was known for his vast knowledge and mastery of Hadith science, the commentator of *Al-Mishkaah* says in his book *Sanad Al-anaam fi Musnad Al-Imaam*[94]: "That Abu Hanifa's knowledge encompasses the noble tradition of the Prophet (pbuh), be it authentic or weak, is a fair statement about Abu Hanifa.[95]"

The great scholar Al-Muwaffaq bin Ahmad Al-Makki, surnamed Sadr Al-Aimmah, says about Khalaf [bin Ayyoob] who was mentioned earlier, in his book *Manaaqib Al-imaam Al-Aadzam*: "Khalaf bin Ayyoob was from Balkh. He did not hear from Abu Hanifa [directly] and hence whatever he narrates [of Abu Hanifa] is on the authority of Abu Yusuf. He was least interested in the worldly matters and was a man of worship. He came to

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84 Al-Khallaal informed us that Al-Hareeri related that Al-Nakhai told them that Sulaiman bin Al-Rabii' Al-Khazzaz reported that Muhammed bin Hafs narrated on the authority of Al-Hasan bin Sulaiman who said…

85 Vol 2/572

86 Vol 12/508

87 Benevolent

88 Vol 13/236

89 Al-Hasan bin Aby Bakr informed us that the Judge Abu Nasr Ahmad bin Nasr bin Ishkaab Al-Bukhaari said that he heard Muhammed bin Khalaf bin Raja say that he heard Muhammed bin Salama say that Khalf bin Ayyoob said…

90 fiqh

91 tabii

92 Page 299. Published by the printing house of Al-Istiqama in Cairo

93 Molla Ali Al-Qaari

94 Page 52, Bahth akl Al-Dabb (research about eating lizard), Printed by Mujteba-i Dehli I the year 1330

95 Abd Al-Fattah Abu Ghudda (ra) says: This statement of Ali Al-Qaari and the aforementioned statement of Ibn Hazm on Muhammed bin Nasr [Al-Marwazi] should be taken as majority of the prophetic traditions not literally. Verily, no Imaam is expected to know every single statement of the Prophet (pbuh) without exception.

Abdullah bin Al-Mubaarak and was well received and generously treated. When he left the gathering, Abdullah bin Mubarak said that his face resembles so much to those of the people of Paradise. He used to attend the study circle of Hammaad bin Salama and when he left the circle, Hammaad said how excellent are the mannerism of this man. We have not seen anyone better than him from Belkh. He died in the year 205. During his funeral procession, the governor of Belkh, Nooh bin Asad, came and joined those carrying the casket on their shoulders until they reach the place of the funeral prayer. He led the prayer and upon completion, he heard a voice saying "you prayed on the best person on the face of the earth, you have prayed on Khalaf bin Ayyoob. This is a [great] success for you.[96]"

The [legendary biographer] and Hadith Master Al-Dhahabi says in his *Siyar aa'lam al-nubelaa*[97]: "Khalf bin Ayyoob, who was a great Imaam, Hadith Master and jurist, judge of the east surnamed Abu Aamir Al-Balky Al-Hanafi Al-Zaahid and the scholar of the people of Belkh. He studied applied law[98] from Abu Yusuf. He also heard from Ibn Aby Layla, Awf Al-Aaraabi, Ma'mar bin Raashid and from other scholars. He accompanied Ibraheem bin Atham for a while. Among those who took hadith from him are Yahya bin Maeen, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Ali bin Salama Al-Labaqi and some people from his compatriots.

In the following section, we will share with you the testimonials and praises of the later Hadith Scholars and Hadith Masters regarding the vastness of the knowledge of Abu Hanifa, his aptness in memorizing Hadith and transmitting it with precision and accuracy. These testimonials supports the previous statement of Khalaf and goes beyond. From Allah is [indeed] the success.

Al-Dhahabi's Praise of Abu Hanifa

Among the most profound and truthful statements of Imaam Al-Dhahabi, who is the ultimate authority in the criticism and authentication of the Hadith narrators, is his statement about the eminent Jurist of Iraq, Hammaad bin Abi Sulaiman (may Allah have mercy on his soul) in his book *Siyar aa'laam al-Nubelaa*[99] where he says: "The most knowledgeable in jurisprudence[100] among the people Kufa was Ali [bin Abi Taalib(ra)] and Ibn Masood (ra), the most knowledgeable among their students is Alqama, the most knowledgeable of his students was Ibraheem Al-Nakhaai, the most knowledgeable among his students was Hammaad [bin Aby Sulaiuman], the most knowledgeable among his students was Abu Hanifa, the most knowledgeable among his students was Abu Yusuf [the judge], the students of Abu Yusuf had dispersed around the world, the most knowledgeable of them was Muhammed bin Al-Hasan [Al-Shaybaani], and [by far] the most knowledgeable of his students was Abu Abdullah Muhammed [bin Idrees] Al-Shaafii (may Allah have mercy on all of them).

Imaam Al-Dhahabi also says in his *Siyar aa'laam al-nubela*[101] in the biography of Imaam Abu Hanifa (ra): "The Eponym, the jurist of the Muslim nation, [the most prominent] Scholar of Iraq, Abu Hanifa… He had great interest in learning Hadith and travelled [extensively] for this purpose. As for the jurisprudence or the applied law and its subtleties, particularities, ambiguities and independent reasoning therein, he is [unquestionably] the ultimate authority. All people are dependent upon him in applied law."

He [Al-Dhahabi] also says "[102]His leadership and ultimate authority in jurisprudence and its delicacies is recognized [by the consensus of the Muslim nation] without doubt".

[How true is the following poetic verse!]

Nothing can be considered authentic for a mind

That needs a proof to know whether it is day or night

He [Al-Dhahabi] says in the biography of Imaam Malik (ra) after he quotes a narration from Imaam Al-Shafii (ra): "[103]The [Islamic] knowledge is confined to three people, namely [Imaam] Malik [bin Anas], Al-Layth [bin Sa'd] and Ibn Uyayana"

I [Al-Dhahabi] would say "It was confined rather to seven [people] with them. They are: Al-Awzaa'i, Al-Thawri, Ma'mar, Abu Hanifa, Sho'ba and the two Hammaads[104]"

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96 Vol 2/61-62. Published by daaira Al-maarif Al-nidzaamiyya Al-dakn in India

97 Vol 9/441-442

98 fiqh

99 Vol 5/236 From the 3rd Edition of Beirut in the year 1405

100 fiqh

101 Vol 6/390 and 392

102 Vol 6/304

103 Vol 8/94

104 [Tr.] What is meant by two Hammads here must be Abu Hanifa's most renowned teacher Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman and Hammaad bin Zayd. Allah knows best.

He [Al-Dhahabi] mentions also in his biography on the authority of Abu Yususf who said: "[105]I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable than Abu Hanifa, Malik and Ibn Abi Layla"

When he [Al-Dhahabi] relates the [fabricated] story that is attributed to [Imaam] Muhammed [bin Al-Hasan Al-Shaybaani] and [Imaam Muhammed bin Idrees] Al-Shafii, that they debated where they compared Abu Hanifa and Imaam Malik, he says: "[106]Ibn Abd Al-Haakim said: I heard Al-Shafii say: Muhammed asked me: Which one is more knowledgeable, our teacher [Abu Hanifa] or yours [Imaam Malik]? I said: Am I to be fair? He said yes. Be fair! I said: please tell me for the sake of Allah who is more knowledgeable in Qur'an? He said your teacher [Imaam Malik]. I said who is more knowledgeable in Hadith? He said your teacher [Imaam Malik]. I said who is more knowledgeable when it comes to the opinions of the companions and their students? He said your teacher [Imaam Malik]. I said the only thing that is left is the legal analogy[107] and the legal analogy can only be practiced based on the aforementioned branches of knowledge and whosoever lacks them, based on what will he do legal analogy?"

Al-Dhahabi commented on this [fabrication] as follows:

"I would say, to be fair, one would have to say that they both know the Book of Allah equally well but the former [Abu Hanifa] is more knowledgeable in legal analogy while the latter [Imaam Malik] is more knowledgeable in prophetic tradition. Likewise, Imaam Malik had gathered sayings of many Companions while Abu Hanifa had gathered the sayings of Ali, Ibn Masood and many other companions who were in Kufa from the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh). May Allah be pleased with both of the Imaams for we are living in a time where people are not fair[108] [in their statements about scholars] anymore. What a sad situation!

He [Al-Dhahabi] says in the biography of Imaam Malik: "Those who are [worthy] to be imitated include:

1. Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) provided that their opinions reaches us with an unbroken authentic chain.
2. The great scholars among the followers such as Alqama, Masrooq, Abidat Al-Salmaani, Said bin Al-Musayyib, Abu Sa'saad, Said bin Jubayr, Ubaydillah bin Abdillah, Urwa, Al-Qaasim, Al-Shaabi, Al-Hasan, Ibn Sireen and Ibraheem Al-Nakaee.
3. Then people like Al-Zuhri, Abu Al-Zinaad, Ayoob Al-Sakhtiyaani, Rabiaa and his peers.
4. Then we have people like [Imaam] **Abu Hanifa**[109], Malik, Al-Awzaai, Ibn Jurayj, Ma'mar, Ibn Abi Arooba, Sufyaan Al-Thawri, the two Hammads[110], Su'ba, Al-Layth, Ibn Al-Maajishoon and Ibn Abi Dhi'b.
5. Then people like Ibn Al-Mubaarak, Muslim Al-Zinji, Abu Yusuf the judge, Al-Hiql Ibn Ziyaad, Waqee' [ibn Al-Jarrah], Waleed bin Muslim and their peers.
6. Then people like [Imaam] Al-Shafii, Abu Ubayd, [Imaam] Ahmad [bin Hanbel], Ishaaq, Abu Thawr, Al-Buwaytiyy and Abu Bakr bin Abi Shayba.
7. Then people like Al-Muzani, Abu Bakr Al-Athram, Al-Bukhaari, Dawood bin Ali, Muhammed bin Nasr Al-Marwazi, Ibraheem Al-Harbi and Ismeel Al-Qadi.
8. Then people like Muhammed bin Jareer Al-Tabari, Abu Bakr bin Khuzayma, Abu Abbas bin Surayj, Abu Bakr bin Al-Mundhir, Abu Ja'far Al-Tahaawi and Abu Bakr Al-Khallal.

After these [individuals], issuance of independent judgment[111] became rare and abridgements[112] were written. The jurists fell into imitation forever. Without looking at who is the most knowledgeable, they started going with the flow to the extent that if someone wanted to follow Abu Hanifa's school of thought in North Africa, it would be very difficult for him to do so. In the same way, if someone wanted to follow the Hanbali school in Bukhara or Samarqand, it would be very difficult for him to do so. No Hanbelite comes from Bukhara and no Hanafite comes from North Africa nor does a Malikite come from India.

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106 Vol 8/112-113

107 qiyaas

108 [Tr.] May Allah Have mercy on Imaam Al-Dhahabi who is bothered by the lack of respect for the scholars in his time. What would he have said if he were living with us today where so called scholars declare openly that Hafidh Ibn Hajar and Al-Nawawi are not part of Orthodox Islam (ahl Al-sunnah wa Al-jamaah) as far as the Names and Attributes of Allah is concerned in creed. The world has never been free of Ulamaa' Al-Soo' (wolves in sheeps' clothing) but what is astonishing is that many innocent and ignorant people are lured to follow these so called scholars. What a sad situation that we are in!!!

109 [Tr.] Note that the chain that connects Abu Hanifa's knowledge to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) goes through scholars that are all listed here by Al-Dhahabi as people worthy of imitating. Here they are: Abu Hanifa took from Hamaad bin Abi Sulaiman who took from Ibrahim Al-Nakhai who took from Alqama who took from Ibn Masood (RA) and who took directly from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). This is only one of many chains by which Abu Hanifa inherited knowledge from Prophet Muhammed (pbuh).

110 [Tr.] What is meant by two Hammads here must be Abu Hanifa's most renowned teacher Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman and Hammaad bin Zayd. Allah knows best.

111 ijtihaad

112 Abridgements (mokhtasaraat): Books that summarize the ruling without going in to details of the supporting texts or how the rules were derived.

He (Al Dhahabi) said in the biography of Yahya bin Adam on the authority of Mahmood bin Ghaylaan: "I heard Abu Usaama say: Omar (ra) was the leader of his time wherein there is no doubt. After him, Ibn Abbas (ra) become the leader. After that Al-Shaabi became the leader. Thereafter came Sufyaan Al-Thawri followed by Yahya bin Adam".

Al-Dhahabi says: Yahya bin Adam was indeed among the greatest of the scholars who reached the level of independent judgment[113].

1. Omar (ra) was as such in his time as he says. Then came Ali, Ibn Masood, Muaaz and Abu Al-Dardaa.
2. After them came Zaid bin Thaabit, Aisha, Abu Musa and Abu Huraira followed by Ibn Abbaas and Ibn Omar.
3. Then came Alqama, Masrooq, Abu Idrees and Ibn Al-Musayyib followed by Urwa, Al-Sha'by, Al-Hasan [Al-Basri], Ibrahim Al-Nakhaai, Mujaahid, Tawoos and many others.
4. Thereafter we have Al-Zuhri, Omar bin Abd Al-Azeez, Qataada and Ayyoob followed by Al-Aemash, Ibn Aoown, Ibn Jurayj and Ubaydallah bin Omar.
5. Then came Al-Awzaai, Sufian Al-Thawri, Ma'mar, **Abu Hanifa**, and Su'ba followed by Malik, Al-Layth, Hammaad bin Zayd and Ibn Uyayna.
6. These are followed by Ibn Al-Mubaarak, Yahya Al-Qattaan, Wakee', Abd Al-Rahmaan and Ibn Wahb.
7. Then, Yahya bin Adam, Affaan, Al-Shaafii and others followed by Ahmad [bin Hanbal], Ishaaq, Abu Ubayd, Ali bin Al-Madeeni and Ibn Maeen.
8. Finally we have Muhammed Al-Daarimi, Muhammed bin Ismaeel Al-Bukhaari and others from the scholars who reached the level of independent judgment."

He [Al-Dhahabi] narrates from Ibn Hazm who said "[114]I follow the truth and do my independent judgment[115] without limiting myself to any school of thought" and then says: "Yes, he who reaches the level and rank of independent judgment[116], and this is confirmed, verified and witnessed by a number of scholars, then it is not permissible for him to imitate [other scholars] as [is necessary] for a jurist who is beginner or for an ordinary Muslim to do so. He who doesn't know Qur'an by heart or most of it, how can he draw rulings[117] directly from Qur'an? What is he going to say? What will he build [his rulings] upon? How is he going to fly when his feathers have not grown yet?

The third category [of people[118]]: The jurist who finished his studies and is vigilant and bright and reached a level of expertise in Hadith[119] who committed to memory [at least] one of the abridgements[120] in a given school of thought in jurisprudence, and memorized a book on the rules of jurisprudence[121], studied [Arabic] grammar has the virtues such as having memorized the book of Allah [in its entirety], has spent significant time studying the interpretation of the Qur'an and able to participate in debates and discussions.

This is the rank of the one who reaches the level of dependent jurist[122]. He is qualified to look at the evidences used by independent jurists[123]. Whenever the true verdict becomes clear for him and there is a Qur'anic text or prophetic tradition about it that one of the eminent scholars, like **Abu Hanifa**, Malik, Al-Thawri, Al-Awzaai, Al-Shaafii, Abu Ubayda, Ahmad, Ishaaq depended on, then he follows the very text without chasing after exceptions and he refrains from unorthodox views nor he can imitate [blindly] once the true verdict becomes clear for him through proofs and evidences".

The great Imaam and Hadith Master Al-Dhahabi reports in the biography of Abu Hanifa (ra) the fabricated story that Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdaadi narrates in his *Taarikh Bahgdaad* on the authority of Abu Yusuf from Abu Hanifa as to how he started acquiring the Islamic sciences and how he ended up choosing the applied law[124] over others. He [Al-Dhahabi] declared this story as false and fabricated and did an excellent job in doing so.

"Abu Yusuf[125] is reported to have said: "Abu Hanifa said: "When I wanted to seek knowledge, I started

113 ijtihaad
114 Vol 18/191
115 ajtahidu
116 ijtihaad
117 yajtahid
118 [Tr.] The first two categories are the student of knowledge who is a beginner and the ordinary person.
119 muhaddith
120 mukhtasaraat
121 usool al-fiqh
122 Mujtahid muqayyad as opposed to independent judge (mujtahid mutlaq) like the four Eponyms.
123 aimmah
124 fiqh
125 Ibn Allaan informed us in written form that Alkindy relates that Al-Qazzaaz reports that Al-Khateeb narrates that Al-Khallal reports that Ali bin Amr Al-hariri narrates that Ali bin Muhammed bin Kas Al-Nakhai reports that Muhammed bin Muhammed Al-Saydanaani reports that Muhammed bin Shuja' bin Thalji reports that Hasan bin Abi Maalik reports on the authority of Abu Yusuf who

asking about consequences of studying certain branch of Islamic sciences. I was told to study Qur'an. I said, if I memorized it, what would I gain? They said: You will sit in the Masjid and teach Qur'an to the little kids and adolescents but before long, one [of them] will become better than you or at least as good as you then you will lose your leadership". I [Al-Dhahabi] would say that he who seeks knowledge for stature or leadership would think like this [i.e., look for the outcome of studying that particular branch of knowledge] otherwise Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) said in an authentic narration: "The best of you is he who learns Qur'an and teaches [it to others]". How astonishing is this fabrication! Are there a better places than Mosques? Is there any branch of knowledge more virtuous and more worthy of dissemination than the knowledge of Qur'an? Are there better students than kids who have never committed a sin? I consider this story a fabricated folktale for among its transmitters are those that are not trustworthy narrators.

The rest of the [fabricated] folktale goes like this: "I [Abu Hanifa] said what happens if I studied and collected Hadith and recorded it whereby I became the number one expert in the Hadith science? They said: When you became old and feeble minded, you will make mistakes as you narrate hadith and those young ones listening to you will not trust you due to your blunders and will label you as liar. This will bring shame upon you. I said, in that case I don't need it.

As I [Al-Dhahabi] stated earlier, this is a fabricated folktale. For Imaam Abu Hanifa studied and collected hadith especially after the year 100. At that time, the children did not study Hadith. In fact, kids did not study hadith until after the year 300. At the time of Imaam Abu Hanifa, only the greatest of the scholars used to study and collect Hadith. Not only that but also the jurists at that time were occupied after the study of the Qur'an only with Hadith books of jurisprudence as the principles of applied law[126] had not developed yet.

Then he [Imaam Abu Hanifa] said: I will study grammar. I asked, if I memorize the books of Grammar and mastered Arabic, where would I end up? They said: You will become a language teacher and your salary will be at most two or three dinars. I said: This doesn't have a promising future. I said: What happens if I become the best poet on the face of the earth? They said: You might praise a ruler and he awards you. If he doesn't you will ridicule him. I said: That doesn't interest me. I said: What happens if I study theology? Those who study theology end up committing [some] blunders and as a result they are charged with infidelity and killed or if they escape death they live a retched life.

I [Al-Dhahabi] would say whoever fabricated this superstitions fable did not know that the theology[127] hadn't developed yet at that time.

I [Abu Hanifa] said: What about if I studied applied law[128]? They said: You will be asked and you will answer giving legal verdicts. You may even be hired as a judge even if you are still young. I said: None of the other sciences appear to be as beneficial as applied law and so I cling to jurisprudence or applied law and studied it [in depth]".

The Hadith Master Al-Dhahbi says[129] in the biography if Imaam Sufyaan Al-Thawri in his book called *Tadhkirat Al-huffadh* adding to his statement [that Al-Thawri said]:

"To acquire hadith [just] for [the sake of] narrating it is not a virtuous investment for the hereafter, rather it is a sickness that keeps one busy"

I (Al-Dhahabi) would say, by Allah he has spoken the truth. For verily acquiring hadith[130] is different than studying it. Acquiring hadith is, in traditional usage, other than study and understanding of hadith. Many of it has to do with being found of knowledge; most of it are matters that the Hadith scholars are found of such as having the most embellished or ornamental copy of a given book, narrating a Hadith with the shortest chain, having most teachers, being pleased with lofty nicknames and praises, wishing a long life to narrate more hadith, hoping to be the sole narrator of a given hadith and many other matters that appeal to the ego instead of pleasing Allah (SW).

If [a noble science such as] acquiring prophetic tradition (hadith) is filled with these [spiritual] calamities, when can one conquer all of these and do it with sincerity? If acquiring science of hadith can lead to such a spiritual disasters, what about logic, debate, philosophy which pillages one's faith substituting in its place doubt and confusion? The latter science, by Allah, were not known to the companions nor the followers, nor of the sciences studied or left behind by Al-Awzaai, Al-Thawri, Imaam Malik, Imaam Abu Hanifa, Ibn Aby Dhi'b or Sho'ba.

Nor were they known, by Allah, to Ibn Al-Mubaarak or Abu Yusuf who said "Whoever seeks to gain knowl-

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said…

126 usool al-fiqh

127 ilm al-kalam

128 fiqh

129 Vol 1/204-205

130 talab al-hadith

edge in religion by studying theology[131] becomes an atheist".

Nor were they known to Waki', Ibn Mahdi, Imaa Al-Shafii, Affan bin Muslim, Abu Ubayd, Ibn Al-Madini, Imaam Ahmad, Abu Thawr, Al-Muzani, Al-Bukhaari, Al-Athram, Muslim [ibn Al-Hajjaaj Al-Naysaburi], Al-Nasaai, Ibn Khuzayma, Ibn Surayj, Ibn Al-Munthir nor to their peers.

Rather, the aforementioned giants of knowledge were concerned with study of Qur'an, Hadith, jurisprudence, grammar and the like. Sufiyan relate, as he heard from Al-Firyabi, that there is no deed better than acquiring Hadith if one can keep his intention pure.

He [Al-Dhahabi] said at the end of the chapter where he talked about the fifth generation of scholars including Abu Hanifa, Malik, Awzaai and Sufyaan: "[132]And during the time of this [5th] generation, Islam and Muslims were enjoying complete might and glory. There existed abundance of knowledge. Among the jurists of the time were Abu Hanifa, Malik and Al-Awzaai."

From the aforementioned statements of Al-Dhahabi we can conclusively sate that:

1. Among the sciences that Abu Hanifa acquired are Quranic sciences, Hadith, Jurisprudence, [Arabic] grammar and the like.
2. Abu Hanifa acquired hadith especially after the year 100. In fact, besides Qur'an, Hadith was the only other science that the scholars of that time occupied themselves with. Abu Hanifa studied hadith and in order to acquire it he travelled [far and wide] many times.
3. He was the most knowledgeable with regards to the sayings and verdicts of Ali and Ibn Masood (ra) and other companions of the Prophet (pbuh) who had settled in Kufa.
4. He was among the top ten scholars of the time. His peers included Malik, Al-Awzaai, Al-Thawri, Al-Layth, Ibn Uyayna, Ma'mar, Sho'ba and the two Hammads as far as the knowledge of Qur'an and Sunnah is concerned.
5. He was among the scholars of independent verdict[133] and was one of the most knowledgeable among them. In fact, he was [undoubtedly] the ultimate authority in jurisprudence or the applied law[134]. [As was stated by Imaam Al-Shafii], all who studied jurisprudence are a indepted to Abu Hanifa.

This is the opinion of the historian of Islam, the eminent farsighted Hadith Master, ultimate authority in accreditation of the narrators, Shams Al-Deen Al-Dhahabi about Al-Imaam Al-A'adzam Abu Hanifaa Al-Nooman, may God have mercy on him.

Ibn Taymiyya's Praise of Abu Hanifa

His [Al-Dhahabi] teacher, eminent scholar, Hadith master, accreditor, jurist, Qur'anic commentator, Shaykh Al-Islam Taqy Al-Deen Abu Al-Abbas Ahmed bin Abd Al-Haleem Al-Harraani, more commonly refreed to as Ibn Taymiyya, the expert in narrators and hidden flaws[135] in the Hadith, says in his *Minhaaj Al-sunnah*[136]: "These people of knowledge who sought after acquiring Islamic sciences day and night, they have no ulterior motives, rather they take sometimes the verdict of one companion and sometimes they prefer the verdict of another according to what they conclude to be more in line with the sources of Divine Law. These include Said bin Al-Musayyib, the jurists of Medina such as Urwa bin Al-Zubayr, Al-Qaasim bin Muhammed, Ali bin Al-Husayn, Abu Bakr bin Abd Al-Rahmaan, Ubaydillah bin Abdillah bin Utba, Sulaiman bin Yasaar, Khaarija bin Zayd, Salim bin Abdullah bin Omar and others that came after them like Ibn Shihaab, Al-Zuhri, Yahya bin Said, Abi Al-Zinaad, Rabiia, Malik bin Anas, Ibn Aby Dhi'b, Abd Al-Azeez Al-Majishoon and others.

In addition, likes of Taawoos Al-Yemaani, Mujaahid, Ataa, Said bin Jubayr, Ubayd bin Umayr, Ikrima (freed slave of Ibn Abbaas), and their successors such as Amr bin Deenar, Ibn Jurayj, Ibn Uyayana and others from the people of Mecca.

And likes of Al-Hasan Al-Basri, Muhammed bin Seerin, Jaabir bin Zayd, Aby Al-Sha'thaa, Mutarrif bin Abdillah bin Al-Shikhkheer. Then Ayyoob Al-Sakhtiyaani, Abdulla bin Auwn, Sulaiman Al-taymi, Qataada, Said bin Abi Urooba, Hammaad bin Salama and Hammaad bin Zayd.

Among their peers are likes of Alqama, Al-Aswad, Shurayh the Judge and the like. These are followed by Ibraheem Al-Nakhaai, Amir Al-Shaabi, Al-Hakam bin Utayba, Mansoor bin Al-Mu'tamir, Sufyaan Al-Thawri, **Abu**

131 ilm al-kalaam
132 Vol 1/244
133 ijtihaad
134 fiqh
135 'ilal
136 Minhaaj Al-sunna Al-Nabawiyya fi naqdi qawl Al-sheea wa-al qadariyya

Hanifa, Ibn Abi Layla, Shareek, Wakee' bin Al-Jarrah, **Abu Yusuf, Muhammed bin Al-Hasan** [Al-Shaybaani] and the like.

Then, Al-Shaafii, Ahman bin Hanbal, Ishaaq bin Rahowyah, Abu Ubayd, Al-Qaasim bin Salaam, Al-Humaydyy Abdullah bin Al-Zubayr, Abu Thawr, Muhammed bin Nasr Al-Marwazi, Muhammed bin Jareer Al-Tabari and Abu Bakr bin Al-Mundhir".

The great Hadith master Ibn Taymiyya listed Abu Hanifa and his two students, Imaam Abu Yusuf and Imaam Muhammed among "people of knowledge who sought after acquiring Islamic sciences day and night, who have no ulterior motives, rather they take sometimes the verdict of one companion and sometimes they prefer the verdict of another according to what they conclude to be more in line with the sources of Divine Law".

He elucidated in another place of the same book that "[137]Abu Hanifa and his students are among the eminent trustworthy scholars of the Muslim nation".

In another place, he says in his book *Minhaaj al-sunnah*[138]: "There came during the subsequent generation those whose genius and piety is known to everyone in the Islamic nation like Said bin Al-Musayyib, Al-hasan Al-basri, Ata bin Abi Rabah, Ibraheem Al-nakhai, Alqama, Al-Aswad, Abidat Al-Salmaani, Tawoos, Mujahid, Said bin Jubayr, Abu Sha'saa' Jabir bin Zayd, Ali bin Zayd, Ali bin Al-Jusayn, Ubaydillah bin Abdillah bin Utba, Urwa bin Zubayr, Alqaasim bin Muhammed bin Abu Bakr, Abu Bakr bin Abdurrahmaan bin Al-Harith bin Hashim, Mutarrif bin Al-sikhkheer, Muhammed bin Waasi', Habeeb Al-ajami, Malik bin Dinar, Makhool, Al-Hakam bin Utayba, Yazeed bin Abi Habeeb and many others that only Allah knows their exact number.

After these came Ayyub Al-Sakhtiyaani, Abdullah bin Awn, Yunus bin Ubayd, Jafar bin Muhammed, Al-Zuhri, Amr bin Dinar, Yahya bin Said Al-Ansari, Rabia bin Abi Abdurrahman, Abu Al-Zinaad, Yahya bin Aby Katheer,Qataada, Mansoor bin Al-Mootamir, Al-A'mash, Hammad bin Aby Sulaiman, Hisham Al-Dastuwaai and Said bin Aby Aruba.

After these came likes of Malik bin Anas, Hamaad bin Zayd, Hammad bin Salama, Al-Lyath bin Sa'd, Al-Awzaai, **Abu Hanifa**, Ibn Abi Layla, Shurayk, Ibn Aby Dhi'b and Ibn Al-Majishoon.

Thereafter came likes of Yahya bin Said Al-Qattaan, Abdurrahman bin Mahdi, Wakee' bin Al-Jarrah, Abdurrahman bin Al-Qasim, Ashhab bin Abdulazeez, Abu Yusuf, Muhammed bin Al-Aasan, Al-Shafii, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Ishaaq bin Rahuwyah, Abu Ubayd, Abu Thawr and many more that only Allah knows their exact number. They had no ulterior motives nor would they prefer anyone for a worldly gain of neither wealth nor position. They are among the most qualified, as far as Islamic sciences are concerned, to look into the text and extract from it the intended meanings or true conclusions."

In another place of the same book (*Minhaj Al-sunnah*) he says: [139] " … Imaams of Hadith science, interpretation of the Qur'an, Sufism, and Jurisprudence like the Eponyms[140] and their students."

In a different place of *Minhaj Al-sunnah* he (may Allah have mercy on his soul) says : "… the foremost Imaams of Islam who are known to be the eminent scholars in religion like Malik, Al-Thawri, Al-Awzaai, Al-Layth bin Sa'd, Al-Shafii, Ahmad, Ishaq, **Abu Hanifa** and Abu Yusuf"

He (may Allah have mercy on him) also said: "[141]… This is the way of the eminent Scholars of Schools of thoughts like Malik bin Anas, Al-Thawri, Layth bin Sa'd, Al-Awzai, **Abu Hanifa**, Al-Shafii, Ahmad bin Hanbel, Ishaaq, Dawood, Muhammed bin Khuzayma, Muhammed bin Nasr Al-Marwazi, Abu Bakr bin Al-Munzir, Muhammed bin Jareer Al-Tabari and their students."

Whoever reads the biographies of these giants of learning, noble men of science in the biographical encyclopedias will be convinced of their splendor and their eminence in scholarship."

The [great] Hadith master Ibn Taymiyya listed **Imaam Abu Hanifa** and his two students (Abu Yusuf and Muammed) among the giants of learning that he describes sometimes as "the leaders of schools of thoughts" sometimes as "the foremost Imaams of Islam who are known to be the eminent scholars in religion" and sometimes as "Imaams of Hadith science, interpretation of the Qur'an, Sufism, and Jurisprudence" and sometimes as "they are among the most qualified, as far as Islamic sciences are concerned, to look into the text and to extract from it the intended meanings or true conclusions and whose genius and piety is known to everyone in the Islamic nation" and sometimes as "those who sought after acquiring Islamic sciences day and night".

He who is described with the above lofty attributes should not be questioned regarding his mastery of Had-

137 Vol 4/77
138 Vol 1/172 and 173
139 Vol 1/215-216
140 four Imaams
141 Vol 1/173

ith science, in particular his trustworthiness in narration, his expertise and retentiveness[142], his ability to memorize hadith and his excellence in doing so, his strength in Quranic sciences as well as prophetic traditions. Those scholars exceeded what appears to be the limit of what is humanly possible and have reached the pinnacle of learning. Biographical encyclopedias are filled with their virtues and accomplishments. The Muslim nation has been following them [for over twelve centuries]. We cannot accept the opinion of every Tom, Dick and Harry who badmouths them or accuses them of lack of knowledge, particularly in Hadith. Verily Allah (SW) speaks the truth and guides to the straight path.

Abu Hanifa the eminent scholar whose trustworthiness is well known

The eminent Jurist and Exemplary Scholar, Shaykh Al-Islaam Abu Ishaaq Al-Shirazi Al-Shafii says about the Eponyms in his book *Al-Luma' fi Usool Al-Fiqh*[143] under the heading *Section on Criticism and Authentication*: "In short, a narrator has to be known either for his trustworthiness or for his perversion or totally unknown. If one's trustworthiness is known like the companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), or best of the followers like Al-Hasan, Ataa, Al-Shaabi, or superb scholars like Malik, Sufyan, **Abu Hanifa**, Al-Shafii, Ahmad and Ishaaq, then one must accept their narration and there is no need to do research on their trustworthiness."

The Hadith Master, Jurist, Shakh Al-Islaam Taqiyy Al-Deen Abu Amr Othman bin Salaah Al-Deen Abd Al-Rahmaan Al-Kurdi Al-Shahrazoori Al-Shafii says in his famous book *Uloom Al-hadith*:

"[144]He whose trustworthiness is known and accepted by the hadith critics and scholars, whose reputation as a trustworthy and reliable [person of knowledge] is spread far and wide, is free of needing any testimonials or accreditation from the authors of the biographical encyclopedias. This is the authentic view of the Imam Al-Shafii and this is the practice in the methodological basis of Islamic Jurisprudence[145]."

Among the Hadith masters who mentioned the above principle is Abu Bakr Al-Khaateeb and he gave as an example Malik, Sho'ba, the two Sufyaans, A-Awzai, Al-Layth, Ibn Al-Mubaarak, Wakee, Ahmad bin Hanbel, Yahya bin Maeen, Aly bin Al-Madeeni and their peers of extraordinary acumen and of straight path [of Islam]. These people's and their peer's trustworthiness should not be questioned. Rather one has the right to question the unknown or little known people to the seekers of knowledge."

The eminent scholar of methodological basis of Islamic Jurisprudence, Hadith master and critic and investigator extraordinaire Al-Kamal ibn Al-Humaam Al-Hanafi [Al-Sivasi Al-Antaki] says in his *Tahreer Al-usool*: "[146]It is known that being famous is an indicator of trustworthiness[147] and retentiveness[148]. This is the case for scholars like Malik, the two Sufyaans, Al-Awzaai, Al-Layth, Ibn Al-Mubaarak and their peers. On must think well of these scholars [who are above needing accreditation]. [Imam] Ahmad [bin Hanbal] reproached the questioner when he asked about Ishaaq [bin Rahuwyah] and [Yahya] bin Maeen reproached the questioner about Abu Ubayda saying Abu Ubayda [is above needing accreditation and he] should be asked about the narrations of others not vice versa. "

The eminent scholar, great Imaam Abd Al-Ali bin Nidzaam Al-Deen Al-Ansaari Al-Sahaalawi Al-Laknawi nicknamed the ocean of knowledge[149] and king of scholars[150] said:

"Topic: Indicators of trustworthiness: From among the indicators [of trustworthiness] is unanimously accepted fame had by the likes of Imaam Malik, Al-Awzaai, Abdullah ibn Al-Mubaarak and also others like the studious Imaam Abu Hanifa and his two students (Abu Yusuf, Muhammed) and the rest of them (Zufar, Ibn Al-Mubaarak, Dawood etc), Imaam Al-Shafii, Ahmad bin Hanbel and the other noble scholars (may Allah bless them[151]). These are above want of accreditation. This is why (i.e., people of such fame are in no need of accreditation) [Imam Ahmad] Ibn Hanbal rebuked someone who asked if Ishaaq bin Rahuwayh was trustworthy. In the same way, Yahya bin Maeen rebuked someone who asked about Abu Ubayda. He said you should ask Abu Ubayda about the reliability and trustworthiness of others instead of asking people about Abu Ubayda. What this means is that Abu Aubayda's fame makes him above needing accreditation and you have no right to ask for credentials of

142 dabt

143 Page 41 Printed by Mustafa Al-baji Al-halabi in Egypt in the year 1358

144 "Uloom al Hadith" that is most commonly known as "Muqaddimat Ibn Al-Salah" page 115 under the heading "Al-Naw' Al-thaalith wa Al-ishreen"

145 usool al-fiqh

146 Refer to "Al-taqreer wa Al-tahbeer sharh Al-tahreer" Vol 2/247, First Edition, Bolaq in Egypt in the year 1316

147 adaala

148 dabt

149 bahr al-uloom

150 malik al-ulamaa

151 quddisa sirruhum

trustworthiness about a person of his caliber.[152]"

The great Hadith Master [and Jurist] of Egypt Abu Jafar Muhammd Al-Tahawi Al-Hanafi say in his "[153]*Declaration of Creed of Mainstream Muslims according to the school of thought of the jurists of the Islamic nation of Abu Hanifa Al-Nooman bin Thabit Al-Kufi, Abu Yusuf Yaa'qoob bin Ibrahim Al-Ansari and Abu Abdullah Muhammed bin Al-Hasaan Al-Shaybaani*": "The scholars among the righteous predecessors among companions and those followed them among the followers[154] of the scholars of Hadith, of Jurisprudence of scholars of Methodological basis of Islamic Jurisprudence are to be mentioned only in a good way and whosoever badmouths them has adapted a way other than that of the [straight] path of [Muslims]."

This is why Al-Dhahabi did not include Al-Imaam Al-A'adzam Abu Hanifa nor the studious pioneer [of learning] Al-Imaam Al-Shafii, nor Al-Imaam Al-Bukhaari in his book called *Al-Mughni Fi Al-Duafaa*[155]" nor in his *Al-Mizaan*[156] [157]. He stated clearly in the introduction of his *Meezaan Al-i'tidaal*[158]:

"[And] as such I do not mention in this book any of the great scholars due to their eminence in Islamic sciences and for their lofty positions in the hearts of the people. Among these scholars are Abu Hanifa, Al-Shafii and Al-Bukhari".

Abu Hanifa's popularity and the worldwide prevalence of his madhab

Abu Hanifa has the privilege among the Eponyms of having the most followers spread throughout the world. Half, rather two thirds, of the Muslim world follows his school of thought which is first ever to be documented and recorded.

The Hadith Master Al-Dhahabi says in his [monumental work] *Siyar a'laam Al-nubelaa*: "[159]The views of Al-Awzai spread among the people for a while. Thereafter, his followers started dwindling in number and disappeared. Such was the case with the followers of Sufyaan and others that we have just mentioned.

Today, only four schools of thought have followers. Very little are those who know the views of these schools of thoughts as it should be [in this day and age] let alone being independent jurists. The followers of Abu Thawr ceased to exist after 300 years and very little of the followers of Dawood [Al-Dzahiri] were in existence. The followers of Ibn Jareer [Al-Tabari] lasted until little after the year 400. … In fact, the school of thought of Dawood was reasonably well established with principles following the texts in a way that is agreed upon by many scholars, however he has isolated and anomalous opinions that sullied his school."

He [Al-Dhahabi] says in his *Tadhkirat Al-Huffadz*: "[160]People of greater Syria and of Muslim Spain were following the school of Al-Awzai for a while. Then, the number of experts in this school started dwindling and today the views of this school are found only in the comparative literature of Islamic Jurisprudence."

The eminent scholar Abdulwahhab Al-Sharani said in his book called *Al-Mizan*: "The School of Abu Hanifa is first of the schools of thought to be established and recorded and will be last to disappear as some of the friends of Allah have stated. Allah (SW) has chosen him as an Imam for His religion and His servants. His followers increase in number by the passage of every century and this will continue God willing until the Day of Judgment. If one of his followers were beaten to abandon his school, he would [endure the pain but] not leave the way of his imam. May Allah be pleased with him and his followers as well as all of those that give him due respect and to other Eponyms."

He (may Allah have mercy on him) also said in *Al-Mizan*: "When Allah (SW) bestowed upon me the blessing of being acquainted with the Islamic law, I found that all the schools of thoughts are [closely] linked with it [Islamic Law]. I found that all four schools follow its course exactly. I also come across [the traces of] some schools that had already disappeared. I found Abu Hanifa' school to be most comprehensive, followed by that of Al-Imaam Malik, Al-Shafii and then Al-Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbel. The least comprehensive was the school of Dawood which

152 From "Fawatih Al-rahmoot sharh Musallam Al-thoboot" with "Al-Mustasfa" Vol 2:148 First Edition in Egypt in the year 1324.

153 [Tr.] This booklet is known most commonly as Aqida Tahawiyya (The Thahawian Creed)

154 tabeen

155 All you need to know about the weak narrators

156 The biography of Imaam Abu Hanifa in some editions of "Al-Meezan" is interpolated and tempered with in a way that it makes it clear that some of what is found therein could not have been written by the original author [Hadith Master Al-Dhahabi (ra)]. I pointed these out in my book called "Al-Imaam Ibn Maja wa kitabuhu Al-sunana" on page 245. A more detailed analysis of the interpolations is given by the great scholar Hadith critic Al-Shaykh Abd Al-Fattah Abu Ghudda in his commentary on Imaam Al-Laknawi's "Al-Raf' Wa Al-Takmil" on pages 121-126 of the second edition.

157 the balance

158 the balance of moderation

159 Vol 8/92

160 Vol 1/182

disappeared during the fifth century. In my estimation, the more comprehensive a school of thought is the longer lasting it will be. Just as Abu Hanifa's school was the first to be founded, so it will be the last to disappear as was said by some righteous people".

Abu Hanifa was a proof161 and an established162 [narrator] and was the most knowledgeable of his era in Hadith and was among its Masters

Shams Al-Aimmah Al-Imaam Abu Bakr Muhammed bin Ahmad bin Abi Sahl Al-Sarakhsi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his *Usool Al-fiqh*: "Imam Abu Hanifa was the most knowledgeable of his era in Hadith, however due to his strict criterion of verification[163], he did not narrate a lot of hadith". Imaam Alauddeen Abu Bakr bin Mas'ood Al-Kasani (may Allah be pleased with him) said in his *Badai' Al-sanai' fi tarteeb Al-sharai'*": "He [Abu Hanifa] was among the Hadith Masters. He would prefer a narration, even a solitary one[164] over legal analogy[165] provided that the solitary narration was coming from an outwardly trustworthy narrator[166]."

Imaam Al-Kaasaani also says in the same book: "A hadith that is authenticated by Abu Hanifa leaves no room for anyone to speak ill of".

Hadith Biographers include Abu Hanifa among the Hadith Masters[167]

The eminent biographers among the Hadith Masters are unanimous in including the biography of Imam Abu Hanifa in their books which are dedicated exclusively to Hadith Masters. Take for example the masterful biographer and Hadith Master Imam Al-Dhahabi who included and praised Abu Hanifa's biography in his celebrated *Tadhkirat Al-huffadz*. In the preface of this book he says: "This [book] mentions the trustworthy transmitters of the prophetic sciences or traditions. In addition, I also mention those whose verdicts are sought after in regards to the attestation, enfeeblement, authentication and falsification [of the narrators]." This book is in print and went through multiple editions recently.

Furthermore, the Hadith Master, who also had expertise in many other Islamic Sciences, Shams Al-Deen Muhammed bin Ahmad bin Abdulhadi Al-Maqdisi included his biography in his book called *Al-Mukhtasar fi tabakat ulamaa Al-Hadith* and praised him. The book has not been published yet[168]. I would like to quote what he says in full. He (may Allah have mercy on him) says: "Abu Hanifa, Al-Nooman bin Thabit bin Zoota Al-Taymi[169] Al-Koofi was the eminent scholar, and the jurist of Iraq. He was born in the year 80. He saw, among other companions of the Prophet (pbuh), Anas bin Malik when the latter came to Kofa. This encounter is narrated by Ibn Saad on the authority of Sayf bin Jabir who said that I heard Abu Hanifa say that he saw Anas bin Malik more than once when the latter came to Kofa.

Abu Hanifa took Hadith from Ataa, Nafee, Abdurrahmaan bin Hurmuz Al-A'raj, Ady bin Thabit, Salama bin Kuhayl, Abu Jafar Muhammed bin Ali, Qatada, Amr bin Deenar, Abi Ishaaq and others.

Among his students in jurisprudence are Zufar bin Huzayl, Daqood Al-Taai, Abu Yusuf, Muhammed, Asad bin Amr, Al-Hasan bin Ziyaad Al-Lului, Noh Al-Jami, Abu Muti Al-Balkhy and many others. He studies jurisprudence under Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman and others.

Among thse who narrated from him are Wakii, Yazeed bin Haroon, Said bin As-Salt, Abu Asim, Abd Al-Razzaq, Ubaidallah bin Musa, Abu Nuaym, Abu Abdurrahman Al-Muqri and others.

He was an eminent scholar, pious, knowledgeable, practicing what he preached, devout worshipper and enjoyed a very high social status. He used not to accept gifts from rulers, rather he would earn his living through trade.

Diraar bin Suraad said: Yazeed bin Haaroon was asked: which of the two are more knowledgeable in jurisprudence Al-Thawri or Abu Hanifa? He said Abu Hanifa is more knowledgeable in jurisprudence and Al-Thawri memorizes more hadith.

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161 Hujjah: A rank in Hadith science that is above Hafidz (Hadith Master). Acording to some, it is the person who have committed to memory 300,000 hadith with the chain of transmitters.[Tr]

162 thabt

163 dabt

164 aahaad

165 qiyaas

166 dzaahir al-adalah

167 huffadz

168 A handwritten copy of this book is preserved in the library of Jamaat Al-Islamiyya in Medina Al-Munawwara. It is a scanned copy. Some of it is now published. When the author wrote the present book it was unpublished.

169 Zoota was associated with Banu Taym tribe because he was their freed slave (mawla). As we will see later a narration from the Imam's son refutes this.

Ibn Al-Mubaarak said: “Abu Hanifa is the most knowledgeable in jurisprudence”. Al-Shafii said: “Everyone is dependent on Abu Hanifa in jurisprudence.” Yazeed said: “I have not seen anyone more pious and intelligent than Abu Hnaifa.” Abu Dawoud said: “Abu Hanifa was an eminent scholar. May Allah have mercy on him.”

Bishr bin Al-Waleed narrates on the authority of Abu Yusuf who said: “I was walking with Abu Hanifa and a man said to another ‘ This is Abu Hanifa who spends his nights worshipping.’ Abu Hanifa said ‘By Allah I would not have people say about me that which is not true.’ and he used to spend the night praying with humility. His excellent qualities and virtues are many. He died in the year 150 in the month of Rajab. May Allah have mercy on him. ”

He [Al-Maqdisi] said in the preface to his book: “This is a book containing abridged biographies of Hadeeth Masters from among the companions, the successors, and the followers. The information found herein is essential for everyone who is involved with Hadeeth science.”

Even though the book is and abridged version, he still includes Abu Hanifa’s biography in this book. Which means that Abu Hanifa is among the select Hadeeth masters whose biographies must be studied by students of Hadeeth science. Then Abu Hanifa was mentioned among the Hadeeth masters by the eminent scholars of Hadeeth and the historian of Greater Syria Shamsuddeen Abu Abdullah, who is more commonly known as Ibn Nassirud Deen Al-Shafi (may Allah have mercy on him), in his book (*Badeeat Al-Bayan…Al-Ayan*) which is a poem and he wrote a commentary on the poem called *At Tibyan Li Badeeyat Al-Bayan* The latter contains mentions of the great Hadeeth masters in poem and prose. I saw a handwritten copy of this book in the library of Sheikh Ul Islam Arif Hikmet in Madeena when I made Hajj in 1387. The book is stored with the history books under the number 48. It contains the following verses:

After these two died Jurayj Al-Dani
Likes of Abu Hanifa Al-Noomani

That is to say one year after the death of Al-Hajjaj and Al-Zubaidy, Ibn Jurayj[170] and Abu Hanifa died.

The first one is Abd Ul-Malik bin Al-Aziz bin Jurayj, nicknamed Abu Al-Waleed. It is also said that he was nicknamed Abu Al-Khaled Al-Amawi, who was their freed slave from Mecca.

The second one is Al-Nauman bin Thabit bin Zouta Al-Taimi who was their freed slave from Kufa. It is said that he is of Persian origin. Ismail bin Hammad bin Abu Hanifa said in a narration: “I am Ismail son of Hammad son of Al-Nouman bin Thabit [Abu Hanifa] bin Al-Marzoban, from the free Persians. By Allah, my family has never been enslaved.”

Abu Hanifa saw Anas bin Malik (ra) more than once when the latter came to Kufa. This was narrated by Sufyan bin Jabir who heard Abu Hanifa mention his encounters with Anas bin Malik (RA).

He narrates Hadeeth from Ataa, Nafii’, Amr bin Deenar, Al-A’raj, Qatada, and from other distinguished scholars. He was one of the eminent scholars of the time and was called the jurist of Iraq. He was a devout worshipper and enjoyed a high social stature. He used to earn his living from trade and would not accept gifts from rulers.

He was one of those who would finish the entire Quran in one unit of prayer. For 40 years, he prayed the morning prayer[171] with the ablution that he made for the night prayer[172]. His virtues are plentiful and known. Al-Shafii said: “The people are dependent on Abu Hanifa in jurisprudence.”

The Imam and Hadeeth master Yusuf bin Hasan bin Ahmad bin Abdulhadi Al-Salihi Al-Hanbali, who is more commonly referred to as Ibn al Mibrad, mentioned him [Abu Hanifa among Hadith Masters] in his book called *Tabaqat al Huffadz* and Al-Shaykh Al-Alama Hadeeth master Abdul Lateef bin Makhtoum Al-Allama Muhammed Hashim Al-Sindi narrates from him [ibn Al-Mibrad] in his book called *Thabu Thabaabat*[173]

Then the seal of the Hadith Masters Al-Imaam Al-Soyooti mentioned him in his *Tabaqat Al-huffadz*. I quoted Al-Imaam Al-Soyooti’s words in my commentary called *Al-Taakiqaat* under the biography of Abu Hanifa. Please refer to it. This book of Imam Al-Soyooti (*tabaakt al-huffadz*) published in Europe and Beirut.

He says in the introduction to his book: “The book entitled *Tabaakt Al-huffadz* is dedicated to the eminent transmitters of the prophetic sciences. In addition, those experts whose opinion are sought after for the criticism and accreditation of the narrators as well as knowing if a hadith is authentic or weak. It is a concise summary of the

170 Al-Hajjaj is Abu Artah Al-Hajjaj bin Artah Al-Koofi Al-Nakhai. He was one of the most knowledgeable scholars. Al-Zubaidi is Abu Huzayl Muhammed bin Al-Walwwd bin Amr Al-Zubaidiyy Al-Hamsy, the judge of Hams. Both of them had died in the year 149 before Ibn Juraayj and Abu Hanifa who died in the year 150 (may Allah have mercy on them). Abdulfattah Abu Ghuddah (may Allah have mercy on him)

171 fajr

172 isha

173 Thabu Thabaabat Al-Dirasaat An Al-Mathaahib Al-Arba’ti Al-Mutanasibaat: Volume 1/445. It was published by the committee of Ihya Al-Adab Al-Sindi Karatchi in the year 1379

biographies authored by Al-Imaam, Hadith Master Abu Abdullah Al-Dhahabi. I [Al-Suyooti] added those hadith masters that came after Al-Dhahabi.

Then, Abu Hanifa was mentioned [among the hadith masters] by Al-Allamah, Hadith Scholar Muhammed bin Rustum bin Qubaad Al-Harithi Al-Badakhshi who is one of the experts in the science of hadith and accreditation of the narrators. In his book *Taraajim Al-Huffadz* which is a single big volume that he abridged the work of the hadith maser Al-Sama'ni called *Kitaab Al-Ansaab*. He abridged some biographies while appending some very valuable information to many others. He finished the book in the year 1146 in Dehli, the capital of India in the month of Rabii Al-Awwal. He says: "Al-Nooman bin Thabit Al-Koofi Abu Hanifa Al-Imaam Al-Adzam, one of the four imams (Eponyms). He mentioned him under the profession of silk trader[174] and said: There are many famous scholars from Iraq that are known to have this profession. As for those among the people of Koofa, Abu Hanifa Al-Nooman bin Thabit Al-Koofi, despite his utmost mastery of Islamic sciences and being highly skilled in having profound and precise understanding and being able to figure out the hidden meanings, he was famous in this profession. He used to trade silk to earn his halal livelihood. It is said that he practiced this profession in his early carrier. He is so famous that it leaves no room for us to [have a need to mention] more of his virtues. He was born in the year 70 AH. He died in the year 150." He concluded the section under heading silk trader with these words. He mentions the imam again under "Al-Ra'y." He defined this word in the biography of Rabia bin Abu Abdurrahman[175] and said Abu Hanifa Al-Nauman bin Thabit bin Al-Nouman Al-Marzuban Al-Taymi Al-Kufi, the leader the school of Al-Ra'y and the jurist of the people of Iraq. He saw Anas bin Malik(ra) [the companion].

He studied under Ataa', Abu Ishaaq Al-Sabi', Muhammed bin Ethar, Hammad bin Abi Sulayman, Al-Haytham bin Habeeb,Qays bin Muslim, Muhammed bin Al-Munkadir,Naafi', freed slave of Ibn Omar (ra), Hisham bin Urwa, and Simaak bin Harb.

Among those who narrated from him are Hushaim bin Bashir, Abbad bin Al-Awam, Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak, Wakia' bin Al-Jarrah, Yazid bin Harun, Abu Yusuf Al-Qaadi, Muhammad bin Al-Hasan Al-Shaybani, Amr bin Muhammad Al-Anqadhi Hawzah bin Khalifa, Abu Abdurrahman Al-Muqri, Abdurrahman bin Al-Hammam, and others.

He is from Kufa and associated with the tribe of Al-Taym from the contemporaries of (the famous reciter) Hamzah bin Habeeb Al-Zayyat. He was born in Kufa and was moved by Abu Jaa'far Al-Mansoor to Baghdad where he lived until his death. It is said that the father of Thabit bin Al-Nauman bin Marzuban is from the free Persians. He went to Ali bin Abi Talib (ra) when he was still young. Ali (ra) prayed for him and his descendants to be blessed. It is said that Imaam's grandfather Al-Nauman bin Al-Marzuban is the one that gave Alvalozc[176] in the day of Al-Nayrouz as a gift to Ali bin Abi Talib (RA). He said our "Nauriz" is every day. Or it is said that this happened on the day of Al-Mihrajaan. He said our "mehrijaaan" is every day.

Ibn Hubayra asked him to become a judge and he refused. He was lashed 10 times a day for 10 days. He refused to work for the government and was steadfast in his decision. When he saw the Imaams resoluteness he let him go.

Abu Hanifa turned his attention to Islamic sciences and reached the pinnacle that nobody had ever reached [among his contemporaries]. He went one day to the Caliph Al-Mansour who was sitting with Isa bin Mousa. The latter said to the Caliph "This is the most renowned scholar in the world today."

Abu Hanifa saw in a dream one day that he was digging up the grave of Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) when the famous dream interpreter Muhammed bin Seereen was told about this dream he said "The one who saw this dream will establish a branch of science that nobody has ever done before."

Misaar bin Khidam used to say "In Kufa, I envied only two people: Abu Hanifa in his knowledge of jurisprudence and Al-Hasan bin Salih in his devoutness and dedication. Misaar also said "Whoever puts Abu Hanifa between him and Allah (SW), I hope he has nothing to fear and he has not neglected any precautionary measures for himself.

Al-Fudayl bin Iyaad said: "Abu Hanifa was famous for his knowledge of jurisprudence, his piety, his wealth, generosity to everyone around him, steadfastness in seeking knowledge day and night. He was very religious, generally spoke very little and kept quiet unless an issue came up regarding if something was permissible or prohibited. In that case, he would point out the truth. He avoided the rulers. If he came across a matter about which there

174 al-khazzaz

175 Al-Ra'y: He was listed under this perhaps due to his knowledge of Al-Ra'y (reasoning): he was knowledgeable in prophetic tradition and also used to reason.

176 Al-faalozaj is a type of a sweet.

is an authentic Hadeeth he would act according to Hadeeth even if it is a saying of a follower[177] or a successor[178], otherwise he would use legal analogy in which he was very skilled."

"He was born in the year 80. He died in the month of Rajab in the year 150. He was buried in the graveyard of Al-Khayzawan at the gate of Al-Taaq. His funeral prayer was repeated 6 times due to the great number of people gathered. The last funeral prayer was led by his son Hammad. He was given a burial bath by Hassan bin Umarrah and another man. I visited his grave more than once." This was mentioned by Al-Dhahabi and Ibn Nassirudeen in the biography of Hadeeth masters. This is the end of what was mentioned by Al-Badakhahi. I saw a handwritten copy of this book in the library of Daar Al-Uloom of Nadwat Al-Ulamaa in Leknaw in India.

Shaykh Allammah trustworthy Hadith Master Al-Imaam Shams Ud Deen Muhammed bin Yusuf Al-Salahi Al-Dimaskhi Al-Shafi, the author of Al-Seerat Al-Shamiyyah says in his book called *Uquud Al-Jumaan*[179] in the 23rd chapter titled "He had extensive knowledge of Hadeeth and he was among the eminent Hadeeth masters": "Know, may Allah have mercy on you, that Imam Abu Hanifa (May Allah have mercy on him) is among the greatest of the Hadith Masters." This was mentioned by the eminent Hadith Master and critic Abu Abdullah Al-Dhahabi in his book called *Al-Moumti'* and *Tabaqaat al Huffadz Al-Muhadeetheen*. He did an excellent job. Had it not been for his mastery of Hadeeth he would not have been able to draw all those rulings of jurisprudence. For verily he is the first to draw rulings from evidences."

Al-Allammah Hadith Master Ismail Al-Ajlouny bin Muhammed Jarrah Al-Shafi says in his paper called *Iqdu Al-Jawhar*[180] which is known as *Risallat Al-Ajlouniyyah*[181]: "I added to its content the *Musned* of Imaam Abu Hanifa Al-Nooman with recognition that he is among the masters of this science." Then he commented on Al-Imaam Abu Hanifa Al-Nauman saying: "He is the Imaam of the (Muslim) nation and its guide. His full name is Abu Hanifa Al-Nauman bin Thabit al Kufi. He was born in the year 80 and died in the year 150. Abu Hanifa is a follower[182] and was the Imaam of the eponyms[183] without doubt. He was the first to open the door of *ijtihaad*[184] by consensus. Once someone becomes familiar with his knowledge of jurisprudence and his school of thought and the breadth of his knowledge recognizes his high stature that he was the most knowledgeable one in the book of Allah and the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh). This is because the Islamic law is taken from the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) [185]. Whosoever is not well versed in Hadith, [as a jurist] he must exert a serious effort to study and acquire hadith in order to take the law from its correct source and directly from the one (the Prophet (pbuh)) who received the revelation [from the Law Giver].

Those scholars of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence and hadeeth who narrated from Abu Hanifa reported unanimously that he prefers an authentic accepted hadeeth over legal analogy. It is true that he did not narrate a lot of hadeeth. At the same time, it must be mentioned that narrating great many hadeeth is not among the conditions of being an imam or performing issuing an independent verdict[186]. This is because issuing an independent verdict depends on knowing the hadeeth by heart, not narrating it to others.

Abu Bakr Al-Siddeeq (may Allah be pleased with him) was the imam of the companions, most knowledgeable of them in jurisprudence and knew the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) the best. No Muslim doubts this fact. He did not narrate a lot of hadeeth, rather he just narrated a few. The imam of all hadeeth scholars by consensus [Imaam Malik] has no authentic narration except what is in his book of Al-Muwatta[187]. Does anyone badmouth Imam Malik about this?

We don't deny the fact that there are some hadeeth that did not reach Imam Abu Hanifa or he came to know about them but the chains that he saw weren't authentic. But this is the case with every mujtahid. Omar (ra) has given his opinion about some matters but after the Prophet's hadith reached him, he modified his view accordingly. This happened to him even though the scholars concluded that Omar (ra) was the most knowledgeable in jurisprudence among the companions after Abu Bakr (ra).

Those who criticized Abu Hanifa, acknowledged that he was one of the great imams, but without realizing

177 tabee

178 min atba' al-tabeen

179 Uquud Al-Jumaan fi Manaqib Al-Imaam Al-Aa'dzam Abu Hanifa Al-Nauman: On page 319. It was published in India in Haydarabaad Al-Dakn by the committee of Ihyaa Al-Maa'rif Al-Naumaniyya in the year 1394AH

180 Iqdu Al-Jawhar Al-Thameen fi Arbaeena Hadeethan min Ahadeethi Sayyid Al-Mursaleen

181 Page 4

182 tabiee

183 mujtahids

184 Issuance of independent judgement

185 Pages 4-6 from the Egyptian print from the year 1322AH

186 ijtihaad

187 Meaning, if we limit the scope to what he has recorded in his Al-Muwatta. Abdul Fattah abu Ghudda

the lofty position he had, they accused him of having used Al-Ra'y[188]. But the ability to reason was considered among the righteous predecessors a praiseworthy quality that allowed the mujtahid to dive deep into the ocean of Quran or the sea of hadeeth to extract the jewels. Without understanding the meaning [apparent or hidden] and the wisdom of the preserved texts (Quran and Sunnah), one cannot speak of independent judgment[189].

It has thus been proven that Abu Hanifa was one of the masters of hadith science. He was among the elite of the Hadith Masters. Whoever studies hadeeth must also study the hadeeth masters. He was among the greatest of the carriers and transmitters of the prophetic tradition. The Hadith Masters' opinions are essential in the science of criticism and authentication. He was among the most knowledgeable in the book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (pbuh).

Abu Hanifa the imam of criticism[190] and attestation[191]

The Hadith Master Al-Allamah Abu Al-Abbas Taqiyyuddeen Abdul Haleem, who is more commonly known as Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his *Talkhees Kitaab Al-Istighatha*, which is known as the response to Al-Bakri[192], "and the opinion of Yahya bin Ma'een, Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Haatim, Abu Zur'a, Al-Nasaai, Abu Ahmad bin Adiy, Al-Daaraqutne, and their peers regarding the narrators of hadeeth, its authenticity or lack thereof is like the opinions of Malik, Al-Thawri, Al-Awzaii, Al-Shaafi and their peers regarding the rulings of the permissible and the prohibited. Among the imams there are those who have mastery in both camps (i.e., Hadeeth and jurisprudence) even if they excel in one of the two sciences more.

The majority of the scholars of hadeeth and jurisprudence like Malik, Al-Shafii, Ahmad, Ishaaq bin Rahouya, Abu Obaidah, Al-Awzaii, Al-Thawri, Al-Layth, Abu Yusuf (Abu Hanifa's student), and **Abu Hanifa** were experts in both fields, however some of them really excelled more than others in both sciences while some were very exceptional in one of the sciences. May Allah be pleased with them all for they were, all of them, people of science and faith."

The eminent Hadith Master Al-Dhahabi says in his book called *Dhikru man Yu'tamadu Qawluhu fil Jarhi wa Al-Ta'deel*[193 194] under the title "The pioneers of authentication and attestation after the era of companions":

1. Al-Sha'bi
2. Ibn Seereen and their peers. It has been reported from them that they declared some narrators as trustworthy and others as weak. Why were there very few weak narrators at that time? The majority of the scholars who had followers at that time were companions who are by definition trustworthy narrators. The next in line were followers[195] and the majority of them were also trustworthy narrators who understood what they used to narrate. These are the scholars among the followers. There exists among the followers those who had been criticized by the scholars such as Aasim bin Dumra, Al-Haarith, Al-Aa'war, and the like. It is true unfortunately that among the followers were chief innovators from the Khawarij, Shia and Al-Qadariyya like Abdurrahman bin Muljam, Mukhtar bin Abu Ubayd Al-Kadhdhab and Ma'bad Al-Juhani. Then, in the early second century, there were a group of weak narrators among the middle and the later generation from the followers. Of these, scholars talked about their weak memory or the fact that they were innovators or practiced innovations like Atiyya Al-Awfi, Farqad Al-Sabakhli, Jabir Al-Jufi and Abu Haron al Al-Abdi. When the era of the generation of followers ended around 150, some of the eminent masters of hadith talked about attestation[196]:
3. Abu Hanifa said: "I have never seen a bigger liar than Jabir Al-Ju'fi"
4. A'mash declared a group of narrators as weak while others he declared trustworthy.
5. Sho'ba criticized some narraters
6. So did Al-Imaam Malik

The prominent hadeeth master and the student of Ibn-Hajar [the most brilliant hadeeth expert among the

188 To use reason to reach a conclusion
189 ijtihaad
190 al-jarh
191 al-ta'deel
192 Pages 13-14 of the Egyptian print
193 Pages 159-162. It is published with "Qaaida fil Jarhi wa Al-Tadeel". It was published by Maktabat Al-Ilmiyyah in the year 1402AH. Edited by eminent hadeeth scholar Abdul Fattah abu Ghudda.
194 The meaning of the title of the book is: the book of experts whose opinions are relied upon in the science of criticism and attestation.
195 tabieen
196 al-tadeel

later generations] Abu Al-Khair Muhammad bin Abdulrahim Al-Sakhawi said[197] : "As Dhahabi stated, a group among the companions talked about the state of some of the narraters. Then from among the followers people like Al-Sha'bi and Ibn-Seereen talked about the weak narrators in small numbers because they were following or taking hadeeth mostly from the companions who were all trustworthy and those that were not companions among the narrators were, at that time, mostly trustworthy. During the first century where the senior followers were taking hadeeth from the companions, the weak and untrustworthy were almost non-existant. It is possible to run into one here and one there like Al-Haarith Al-A'war and Al-Mukhtar Al-Kathaab.

Towards the end of the generation of the companions and at the beginning of the generation of followers there were many of the middle generation of the followers that were declared weak in their inability to reliably transmit the hadeeth as they heard it. You see them attributing the saying of companions[198] to the Prophet (pbuh)[199] and they would often narrate directly form the Prophet himself skipping the companions[200] and they would make many mistakes like Haroun Al-Abdi

Towards the end of the generation of followers circa 150, a group of scholars started talking about criticism and attestation of the narrators. Abu Hanifa said "I have not seen a worse liar than Jaabir Al-Jou'fi." Al-A'mash declared a group of narrators as weak and qualified others as trustworthy. Sho'ba took up the study of attestation of the narrators. He would make absolutely sure that the person from whom he would take hadeeth was reliable and trustworthy. Al-Imaam Malik did the same.

Al-Imaam Al-Allama Hadith Master Abdul Qaadir al Qurashi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his *Al-Jawhar al mudiyyah fi Tabaqat Al-Hanafiyyah*[201] 'Know that Abu Hanifa's opinion regarding the criticism and attestation of the narrators was accepted [and relied upon]. The scholars of the hadith science took his views and applied them as they took from Al-Imaam Ahmad, Al-Bukhari, Ibn Maeen Ibn Al-Madeeni and others from among the Hadith Masters.

This indicates to you that Abu Hanifa enjoys a lofty position among the scholars of hadeeth and the vastness of his knowledge and that he was one of the leaders of hadith science.

[Here is an example where one of the greatest scholars of hadith science namely] Al-Imaam Al-Tirmithi (ra) narrates in his *Kitaab Al-Illal* from his *Jaami' Al-Kabir* saying: "Mahmood bin Ghaylan narrated on the authority of Yahya al Himaani who said "I heard Abu Hanifa say "I have not seen a worse liar than Jaabir Al-Jou'fi or a better [narrator] than Ataa bin Abi Rabaah"

We narrated in *Al-Madkhall Li Ma'rifat Dalaail Al-Nobowwa* by the Hadith Master Al-Bayhaqi with its chain of transmission on the authority of Abdul Hameed Al-Himmani who said "I heard Abu Said Al-Saghani say that he asked Abu Hanifa "O Abu Hanifa, what do you say about narrating hadeeth from Al-Thawri? He said: take his hadeeth for verily he is trustworthy except what he narrates from Abu Ishaaq and from Jaabir al Jou'fi"

Abu Hanifa Said "Talq bin Habib used to not believe in Divine determination[202]". Abu Hanifa also said "Zayd bin Ayyash is a weak narrator."

Suwayd bin Said said on the authority of Sufyan bin Uyayna who said: "The first person to make me narrate hadith was Abu Hanifa. When I arrived Kufa, Abu Hanifa said to the people: this is the most knowledgeable regarding the narration of Amr bin Dinaar and so they used to gather around me and I narrated Hadith to them."

Yaqoob bin Shayba said: "[These are the] words of Raqabat bin Masqala that Sufyan bin Uyayana narrates on the authority of Abu Hanifa. Yaqoob said: "When Ibn Al-Madeeny came to know about them he said: "I don't have that information".

Abu Suilaiman Al-Jawzajani said: "I heard Hammad bin Zayd say: "We did not know the nickname of Amr bin Deenar until Abu Hanifa told us". We were in the Holy Mosque in Mecca and Abu Hanifa was with Amr bin Deenar. We said O Abu Hanifa [please] tell him to narrate to us some Hadith. He said "O Abu Muhammed talk to them about some Hadith. He did not say O Amr talk to them".

Abu Hanifa said:" May Allah curse Amr bin Ubayd for verily he opened the door of theology[203] to the people. Abu Hanifa said: "May Allah destroy Jabir bin Safwaan and Muqatil bin Sulaiman. The former went into one extreme in rejecting [the Hadith] and the latter went into another extreme in accepting [the Hadith]"

It is narrated in *Al-Jawhar Al-Mudiyy fi tabakat Al-Hanafiyya*[204] also.

197 On page 479 of "Fath Al-Mugheeth bi Sharh Al-Fiyyat Al-Hadeeth" published by Anwar Muhammadi in Leknaw India

198 mawquf

199 marfoo'

200 irsaal

201 Volume one pages 30-31 printed in India

202 qadar

203 ilm al-kalaam

204 Vol. 1/30-32. First edition.

Al-Tahawi said: Sulaiman bin Shuayb informed us that his father related saying: "Abu Yusuf dictated to us and said:" Abu Hanifa said: "He who is not able to memorize the Hadith and keep it in his memory from the day he heard it until the day he shares it with others, he must not narrate it."

I heard our beloved teacher Al-Allama, trustworthy hadith scholar Zaynaddeen bin Al-Kinani in his lesson on Hadith in the dome of Al-Mansoora used to support the above statement [of Abu Hanifa]. He was the Sultan of the scholars of that time. I heard him say in this particular gathering: It is not permissible for me to narrate any Hadith other than the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "Without doubt I am the prophet of God and I am the [grand] son od Abdulmuttalib". This is because I memorized it the first time I heard it and it is still in my mind as I heard."

Unfortunately the majority of the people are not as strict in narrating the hadith as Abu Hanifa was. It is due to this strict condition that he placed on himself that the number of Hadith he narrated are not many. There is no other reason as the biased and prejudiced people would like you to believe.

Abu Asim said: "I heard Abu Hanifa say: "Reading is permissible. That is to say for a student to read book of his teacher or otherwise to his teacher word for word from cover to cover and the Shaykh makes sure that student understands the book as it should be."

He also said: I heard Ibn Jurayj say: "Reading is permissible. That is to say for a student to read a book to his teacher."

On the authority Abu Asim who said that Ibn Jurayj, Ibn Abu Dhi'b, Abu Hanifa, Malik bin Anas, Al-Awzai, Al-Thawri, all of them informed me that if a student reads a book to a scholar, there is no harm if the latter says that such and such scholar informed me.

Abu Qatan said as was reported by Al-Tahawi that Abu Hanifa told him that if he reads a book to Abu Hanifa he can relate the content by saying "Abu Hanifa related to me". Malik told me to read him a book and later if I need to share the content with others I can say "Malik related to me[205]"

Al-Tahawi said: "Rawh bin Al-Faraj narrated to us that Ibn Bokayr informed them saying when we finished the book of Al-Muwatta of Al-Imaam Maalik, a man stood up and said O Abu Abdullah (Imaam Malik) how should we narrate what is in Al-Muwatta? He said if you want, you can say [Maalik] narrated to me or you can say [Maalik] informed me or you can even say [Malik] informed us. I seem to remember that the Imaam also said if you wish you can say "I heard [from Malik]"[206]

Abu Hanifa said: "I don't have any authentic narration from the Prophet (pbuh) that he used to wear pants so that I should give verdict[207] [in favor of it][208]

Al-Tahawi said: "Ibn Hibban said in his authentic[209]: "Abu Yahya Al-Himmani[210] said I heard Abu Hanifa say: "In all my encounters [teacher/student] I have not seen anyone better than Ataa nor have I seen any worse liar than Jabir Al-Joofi. Whenever I informed him of my opinion [on a certain subject], he started claiming that he has a thousand hadith from the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) [regarding the subject] that he would not narrate. This is Abu Hanifa declaring Jabir untrustworthy and accusing him of lying."

Ibn Hibbaan said in his book of *Al-Thiqaat* in the biography of Abu Muhammed Musa bin Al-Sindi: On the authority of Muhammed bin Ismaeel[211] who said I heard Abu Hanifa say: "They say that whoever has a long beard, he is not very intelligent but I saw Alqama bin Marthad who had a long beard an a brilliant mind."

The hadith master Abu Ahmad Abdullah bin Adi Al-Jurjani said in his *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Duafaa* while talking about Jabir bin Yazeed Al-Ju'fi: "Abu Yahya Al-Himmani[212] said: I heard Abu Hanifa say: I have not seen anyone better than Ataa [as teacher] nor have I met a worse liar than Jabir Al-Jufi. I have never informed him of a ruling ex-

205 haddathani

206 Part of this was missing in the original manuscript based on what is in "Al-Jawaahir". I completed based on what is in "Al-Taswiya bayna Haddathana wa Akhbarana" by Al-Tahawi. Abdulfattah Abu Ghudda

207 fatwa

208 This anecdote was narrated as such in "Al-Jawhar Al-Mudiyya" in its abridged form. The full story is found in "Al-Intiqa" of Iban Abdulbar on pages 140 and 141. "Muhammed bin Ismail Al-Saaigh said Dawood bin Al-Muhabbar narrated to us that Abu Hanifa was asked: The pligram doesn't have Al-Izaar (cloth covering lower part of the body), can he wear pants? Abu Hanifa said: He should sell his pants and buy Al-Izaar. He was told: Prophet of Alah (pbuh) delivered a sermon and said: If a pilgrim cannot find Al-Izaar, he can wear pants. Abu Hanifa said: I don't have any auithentic narration from the prophet regarding this matter such that I can issue a verdict in favor of it." Every mufti (issuer of legal verdicts) issues verdicts based on what he has in terms of [authentic] information from the Prophet (pbuh). We have an authentic narration from the Prophet (pbuh) who said: "The pilgrim doesn't wear trousers". This is what we go by. He was told: Do you go against the Prophet (pbuh)? He said: "May Allah curse the one who goes against the Prophet (pbuh). Allah SW blessed us through him saved us from the fire through him. Abdulfattah Abu Ghudda.

209 From "Al-Ihsaan bi Tarteen Saheeh Ibn Hibbaan", vol 3/273. Printed by Daar Al-Kotoob Al-Ilmiyya in Bayroot.

210 Al-Husayn bin Abdullah bin Yazeed Al-Qattaan informed us in Al-Riqqa saying Ahmad bin Abu Al-Hawari narrated saying I heard Abu Yahya Al-Himmani say…

211 Imraan bin Musa bin Mujasee' narrated to us that Musa bin Al-Sindi related to them that Muhammed bin Ismaeel informed them saying…

212 Al-Husayn bin Abdullah Al-Qattan narrated to us that Ahmad bin Abu Al-Hawari informed them saying I heard Abu Yahya Al-Himmani say…

cept he came up with a hadith claiming that he has 1000 hadith from the Prophet (pbuh) but never narrated them".

Abu Said Al-Saghaani[213] said: A man came to Abu Hanifa and said: What is your opinion about taking hadith from Al-Thawri? He said: Write his hadith except from Abu Ishaaq on the authority of Al-Haarith from Ali and from Jabier Al-Jufi."

I heard Abdullah say: Abdulhameed Al-Himmani narrated from Abu Hanifa who said: "I have not seen any liar worse than Jabir". Abdulhamid Bahsmini[214] rtelated from Abu Hanifa who said: "I have not seen any liar worse than Jabir Al-Jufi",

Hadith Master Abu Omar Yusuf bin Abdulbar Al-Qortubi said in his *Jami' bayaan Al-ilmi wa fadlihi*[215] : Abu Hanifa, even though he was closer to Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman than anyone, used to prefer Ataa over Hammaad. Abu Aasim Al-Dahhak bin Makhlad[216] said that he heard Abu Hanifa say: "I have not seen anyone better than Ataa [as teacher]".

Abu Yahya Al-Himmani[217] said I heard Abu Hanifa say:"I have not seen anyone better than Ataa [as teacher] nor have I seen any worse liar than Jabir al Jufi [as narrator]."

Al-Bayhaqi said in his *Kitaab Al-Qiraah Khalf Al-Imaam*[218]: "If no one else criticized Jabir Al-Jufi besides Abu Hanifa that would be more than enough proof that he was not trustworthy. Abu Hanifa saw him, experienced his company, and heard from him things that compelled him to declare him a liar and inform others."

Abu Yahya Al-Himmani[219] said I heard Abu Hanifa say: "I have not seen anyone better than Ataa [as teacher] nor have I met a worse liar than Jabir Al-Jufi. Whenever I came to him with a ruling, he came up with a hadith and claimed he has a thousand hadith from the Prophet (pbuh) but he never related them."

Abdulhameed Al-Himmani[220] said: I heard Abu Said Al-saghani say: A man came to Abu Hanifa and said what do you say to someone who wants to narrate from Al-Thawri? He said: "Write his hadith except which he narrates from Abu ishaaq on the authority of Al-Harith from Ali and the hadith of Jabir Al-Jufi."

Abu Yahya Al-Himmani[221] said: "I heard Abu Hanifa say: I have not seen any worse liar than Jabir Al-Jufi".

The master of many Islamic Science and the eminent hadith master Abu Muhammed Ali bin Ahmad bin Said bin Hazm Al-Dzahiri said in his book *Al-Muhalla fi sharh Al-majalla bi-alhujaj wa Al-aathar*[222]: Jabir Al-Jufi is a big liar. The first to testify that he is so was Abu Hanifa."

He also said[223]: "Mujalid is a weak narrator. First one to declare him weak was Abu Hanifa."

Haakim narrates in his *Taarikh Naysaboor* in the biography of Ahmad bin Abbas bin Hamza Al-Waeez through Abu Mushir who said: Said bin Abdulazeez narrated to us saying: Abu Hanifa used to say: The first man to become Muslim was Abu Bakr. The first woman to become Muslim was Khadija and first child to become Muslim was Ali (May Allah be pleased with them all)[224]

The hadith master Al-Dhahabi says in *Tadhkiraat Al-Huffadz*[225] in the biography of Ataa bin Abu Rabaah: "Abu Hanifa said: I have not seen any one better than Ataa [as a teacher]"

He related in the biography of Abu Al-Zinaad, the Jurist of Medina[226] that Abu Hanifa said: "I saw Rabia and Abu Al-Zinaad. Abu Zinaad is the more knowlegable of the two in jurisprudence."

He related in the biography of Jafer Al-Saadiq[227]: "On the authority Abu Hanifa who said: "I have not seen anyone more knowledgable than Jafer bin Muhammed".

The eminent scholar, hadith master, linguist and prolific writer Atheer Al-Deen Muhammed bin Yusuf

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213 Abdullah bin Muhammed bin Abdulazeez informed us that Muhammed bin Gaylan narrated to them that Abdulhameed Al-Himmani reported to them saying I heard Abu Said Al-Saghaani say…

214 Ibn Abu Bakir informed us that Abbas related to them that Ibn Hammad reported saying Abbas said that Abdulhamid Bahsmini rtelated to us from Abu Hanifa who said…

215 Vol 2/153. Printed by Idaarat Al-thabaat Al-muniira in Egypt

216 Hakem bin Munzir informed us that Yusuf bin Ahmad reported to them that Abu Raja Muhammad bin Hammad Al-Muqri related to them that Omar bin Shabba said that Abu Aasim Al-Dahhak bin Makhlad said that he heard Abi Hanifa say…

217 Hakam informed us saying Yusuf related to us saying Aby Abdullah Muhammed bin Khayran the pious Jurist said: I heard Abu Yahya Al-Himmani say I heard Abu Hanifa say…

218 Pages 108,109. Published in Delhi 1915.

219 Abu Said Al-malini reported to us that Abu Ahmad bin Adi, the Hdith Master, informed us that Al-Husayn bin Abdullah Al-Qattaan related that Ahmad bin Abu Al-Hawani said I heard Abu Yahya Al-Himmani say I heard Abu Hanifa say…

220 Asaad informed us that Abu Ahmad related to them that Abdullah bin Muhammed bin Abdulazeez reported to us that Muhammed bin Ghaylan informed us that Abdulhameed Al-Himmani said…

221 Abu Abdullah, the hadith master said: I heard Abu-Alabbas Muhammed bin Yaqoob say: I heard Al-Abbas bin Muhammed Al-Dousi say: I heard Abu Yahya Al-Himmani say…

222 "Fath Al-mogheeth bi sharh alfiyya Al-hadeeth" of Al-Shawkani. Page 388.

223 Vol 5/243

224 Vol 1/387. Printed in Beirut.

225 Vol 1/98

226 Vol 1/135

227 Vol 1/166

Abu Hayyaan Al-Andolusi Al-Girnati Al-Dzahiri says in his famous Qur'anic commentary *Al-Bahr Al-Moheet*[228]: "Al-Thawri, Abu Hanifa, Yahya bin Adam said Hamza surpassed others in Qur'an and obligatory rituals."

In any case, our Imaam, the greatest of the Eponyms, Abu Hanifa Al-Nooman (may Allah be pleased with him) was among the greatest of the scholars of chritsizim and attestation[229] of his time. He was among those whose opinion was not only accepted but weighed heavily. If he declared someone weak or trusthworthy, people listened to him. He was very strict in his narrations. He almost exclusively narrated from the trustworthy narrators like Shoba and Malik (ra). He was the first to be selective about the narrators. He stayed away from those who are not trustworthy. He would not narrate except what comes to him through authentic chain nor would he narrate except what he committed to memory. After him, Imaam Maalik was the same way.

The king of hadith scholars, the ultimate authorithy in chritisizm and authentication Yahya bin Maeen said, as was narrated by hadith master Ibn katheer in *Al-Bidaya wa Al-nihaya*[230]: The scholars are four: Al-Thawri**, Abu Hanifa**, Maalik and Al-Awzaai."

These four are great scholars. Abu Hanifa and Malik excelled in the scence of scrutiniy of the narrators[231]. Al-Thawri ans Al-Awzai [excelled in narration and] are trustworthy narrators that Abu Hanifa relied upon in his *Kitaab Al-Aathaar* and Maalik in his *Al-Muwatta*. That Al-Thawri and Al-Awzaai are trustworthy narrators is widely accepted as Abu Hanifa and Maalik agreed upon [their trustworthiness]. When they [Abu Hanifa and Malik] disagree on someone's trustworthiness, which is vey rare, like Zayd bin Ayyaash, then one has to search for the expert opinion of other scholars [to come to a sound conclusion].

Abu Hanifa narrates via one of the soundest chains of transmission

Another proof of Abu Hanifa's lofty status in the Hadith Science, his accuracy, his excellence, the authenticity of his narration is that in reponce to Al-Bukhari's saying "The most authentic of all chains are Maalik from Nafi' from Ibn Omar (may Allah be pleased with them both)" and the follow-up of Al-Imaam Abu Mansoor Abdulqahir bin Taahir Al-Taymi that best of the chains is Al-Shafii from Maalik from Nafi' from Ibn Omar, Al-Imaam Al-Allama the Hadith Master Alaaddeen Al-Mogholtay contended saying "Abu Hanifa narrates hadith from Maalik as was mentioned by Daaraqotni".

Albulqini reported in his "Mahasin Al-Istilah" saying "As for the narratin of Abu Hanifa from Malik, it did not become widespread as did the narration of Shafii from him [Malik]".

Al-Iraqi says: The narrations of Abu Hanifa from Maalik, as was mentined by Al-Dartaqotni, are in Al-Gharaaib[232] and in Al-Mudabbaj[233] not from what he narrates via Nafii' from Ibn Omar. The issue is presumed. Al-Khateeb narrates such a Hadith [of Abu Hanifa] from Malik.

Shaykh Al-Islaam Ibn hajar Al-Asqalani (ra) says: "His objection regarding Abu Hanifa's narration from Malik is not well founded. This is because Abu Hanifa's narration from Malik is not well established. What was narrated by Al-Daraqutni and the two narrations by Al-Khateeb came with chains of transmission that received some critisizm. The narration of abu Hanifa from Maalik was more of a quotation than narration. He did not mean to narrate from him like Al-Shafii did. The latter spent a long time with Malik and took Al-Muwatta from him." This was recorded by Al-Soyooti in his *Tadreeb Al-rawi sharh taqreeb Al-nawawi*.[234]

Look dear reader, may Allah (sw) take care of you, when the hadith master Mogholtay mentiones Al-Imaam Abu Hanifa among the most authentic chains, going therough Malik from Nafii' from Ibn Omar (ra), the great hadith master (like Al-Iraqi and Ibn Hajar) doesn't accuse Abu Hanifa of having a bad memory or being a weak narrator nor do they deny his status as a hadith master nor his mastery of the hadith science. They disagree with the hadith master Mogholtay about the fact that Abu Hanifa's narration from Malik is not well known or widespread and that he should not be included in the chains unlike Imaam Al-Shafii. They also say that Abu Hanifa did not relate from Malik like a hadith narrator would relate from his teacher rather it was like a quotation or Abu Hanifa's narration did not go through Nafii' or his narration from Malik did not come down through a reliable chain. From the above statement of the hadith masters we can conclude the concensus of the hadith masters such as Mogholtay, Al-Bulqini, Al-Iraqi, Al-Soyooti, Shaykh Al-Islam ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani that Abu Hanifa is comparable to Maalik

228 Vol 3/1. Second edition in Beirut, 1403
229 al-jrah wa al-taadeel
230 Vol 10/116
231 naqd al-al rijaal
232 rare hadith
233 embellished
234 Page 30. Printed in Al-Kayriyya in the year 1307.

and Al-Shafii in his mastery of hadith science and his lofty status in it.

If Imaam Mogholtay said: Among the strongest chains is Abu Hanifa from Nafii' from Ibn Omar, it would have been better. There is no doubt that among t he strongest chains of Abu Hanifa is his narration from Ataa from Ibn Abbas (ra). This chain was mentioned by Abdulwahhab Al-Sharani in *his Al-Mizaan Al-kubra* and he mentions the chain of Malik from Ibn Omar (ra).

The Hadith Master Al-Dhahabi said in the biography of Abidat Al-Salmani in his *Siyar a'laam Al-nubelaa*[235] Abu Amr bin Al-Salah said: It was narrated to us from Amr bin Ali Al-Fallas that he said: The most authentic of chains is: Ibn Seerin from Abida from Ali.

I (Al-Dhahabi) would say that undoubtedly this chain is strong however it is not necessarily stronger than Ibrahim from Alqama from Abdullah nor it is stronger than Al-Zohri form Salim from his father (Ibn Omar (ra)). Furthermore, through these chains you will find many hadith in the authentic collection (i.e., Bukhari and Muslim) while there is no hadith from Abida from Ali except for one."

Al-Dhahabi also said in the biography of Alqama bin Qays Al-Nakhai Al-Koofi[236]:" Some of the ahdith masters said and they were right in that the strongest of the chains are:

-Mansoor from Ibraheem from Alqama from Abdullah bin Masood (ra)

Based on the above statement, the strongest chains containing these are: Shoba and Sufyaan from Mansoor, from these two took Yahya bin Al-Qattan and Abdurrahman bin Madani and form him Abu Abdullah Al-Bukhari (may Allah haave mercy on them all).

He said in his biography of Wakee bin Al-Jarrah[237]: "The most authentic or the strongest of the chains in Iraq and outside is Ahmad bin Hanbel from Wakii from Sufyan from Mansoor from Ibrahim from Alqama from Abdullah from the Prophet (pbuh). In his *Musnad* there are numerous narrations through this chain.

Abdullah bin Hashim said: Wakee came to us and said" Which chain do you like most? A'mash from Abu Wail from Abdullah or Sufyan from Mansoor from Ibrahim [from Alqama] from Abdullah?

We said: Al-A'mash, for verily his chain is shorter. He said: better is the second chain for it is narration of a jurist from a jurist whereas the first one is narration of a shaykh from a shaykh. A hadith that is circulated by the jurists is better than the hadith that is circulated by shaykhs."

He said in the biography of Abdullah bin Haashim[238]: Yahya bin Muhammed Al-Anbaari narrated to us that Ahmad bin Salama related that Abdullah bin Hashim reported saying Wakee asked us: Which of the following chains is most beloved to you? Al-A'mash from Abu Al-Wail from Abdullah or Sufyaan form Mansoor from Ibrahim from Alqama from Abdullah? We said: the first chain. He said Al-A'mash is a shaykh, Abu Wail is a shaykh while Sufyaan, Mansoor, Ibrahim and Alqama are all jurists. A hadith that is circulated by jurist is better than the one by shaykhs.

I (Al-dhahabi) would say that Al-Amash and his shaykh (Wail) are also knowledgable in jurisprudence"

I would say based on what was said by Al-Dhahabi that the best and the greatest of the chains of Iraq are what was narrated by Abu Yusuf and Muhammed bin Al-Hasan from Al-Imaam Al-A'dzam Abu Hanifa from Hammad bin Abu Sulaiman from Ibrahim from Alqama or Al-Aswad from Abdullah bin Masood (ra) from the Prophet (pbuh). These are all noble jurists. They are men of knowledge and person of great stature. Furthermore, Abu Yusuf and Muhammed are more knowledgeable and greater scholars than Waki' and Abu Hanifa is more knowledgeable and greater scholar than Sufyan and A'mash. In the same way his teacher Hammad is more knowledgeable and greater scholar than Mansoor.

The great hadith master Ibn Hajar said in his *Sharh Nukhbat al fikr fi mustlah ahl Al-athar*: "There exists among the solitary narrations[239] which are divided into well known[240], scarce[241], and rare[242] that can serve as speculative[243] knowledge [as opposed to decisive] in the presence of external evidence [i.e., other supporting narrations] according to the preferred opinion. The types of narrations relying on external evidence are many. Among them are what was narrated by Bukhari and Muslim in their authentic that does not reach to the level of unanimously agreed upon[244] narration. In addition, we have well known narrations having various chains of trans-

235 Vol 4/14
236 Vol 4/60-61
237 Vol 12/328-329
238 Vol 1/158
239 akhbar al-aahad
240 mashoor
241 azeez
242 ghareeb
243 dzanni
244 mutawatir

mission that are free from weak narrators and defects[245].

Among them are enchained hadith[246] narrated by the great hadith master whereby it cannot be classified as rare[247] like a hadith that was narrated by Ahmad bin Hanbel from Al-Shafii with others partaking in this narration or what Al-Shafii narrates from Malik along with others. Such a hadith constitutes evidence for the one who hears it due to the fact that its narrators are eminent scholars whose charateristics [of precision, trustworthiness etc.] necessitates acceptance of their narration as though it was narrated by multitude of people.

No one with any amount of knowledge of hadith science will doubt that when Malik for example utters a narration that it is true. If, in addition, same narration is circulated by others who are at his level then they will only strengthen each other which will make the possibility that the narration contains an error or mistake is very unlikely."

I would say, based on previous discussion, what was narrated by Al-Imaam Al-Layth bin Sa'd and others from Imaam Abu Yusuf and what was narrated by Abu Yusuf and others from Al-Imaam Al-A'dzam Abu Hanifa or what was narrated by Al-Immam Al-Shafii from Al-Imaam Muhammaed bin Al-Hasana Al-Shaybani from Al-Imaam Al-A'dzam Abu Hanifa are both supported by external evidence[248] and enchained[249] by the great imams and hadith masters.

Rather, the enchained[250] narrations of imams could be preferred over what is in the two authentics of Bukhari and Muslim also. Ibn Hajar says in *Sharh Al-nukhba*: "A Hadith of low rank could in some circumstances acquire a higher rank, for example, if the hadith is in Muslim and it is well known[251] but doesn't reach the level of unanimously agreed upon[252]; however it is supported by external evidence [other narrations] such that it constitutes evidence and it would be preferred over what is narrated by Bukhari if it [Bukhari's narration] is of absolute isolation[253]. In the same way if there is a hadith not to be found in either of the authentics of Bukhari and Muslim but the chain is one of most authentic chains such as Malik from Nafi' from Ibn Omar then the letter is preferred over what was narrated by either of the authentics especially if the chain of the one of the authentics contains a narrator about whom there is dispute."

Based on aforementioned statement of Ibn Hajar, narrations of Malik from Nafii' from Ibn Omar is preferred over what was narrated by one of the authentics of Bukhari and Muslim so is what was narrated by Abu Hanifa from Nafii' from Ibn Omar or from Ataa bin Abu Rabah from Ibn Abbas or what Abu Hanifa narrated from his teacher Hammad from Ibrahim from Alqama from Ibn Masood (ra).

Consensus of the Great Hadith Masters, who collected the narrators of the six authentic collections, over complete absence of any discreditation regarding Abu Hanifa as Hadith Master

The great hadith masters and Imams who have recorded the narrators of the six [authentic] books have praised Abu Hanifa (ra) with prolific exaltations. There is not a trace of a criticism of his in their books of neither having bad memory nor being heedless. Rather, they mention his exceptional memory and mastery of Islamic sciences. They mention him always with praises. This is a proof that they disregarded completely any criticism of the Imam [Abu Hanifa] that predated them.

Al-Imaam, Hadith Master, Yusuf bin Zeki Abdurrahman Abu Al-Hajjaj Jamaladdeen Al-Mizzi, hadith scholar of greater Syria, the eminent hadith master, unparalleled in this science who was from Damascus and was Shafii. In his [most unique] book *Tahdheeb Al-kamal*, he included a detailed biography of Al-Imaam Abu Hanifa. In fact, all that the hadith master Al-Soyooti mentions in his biography of Abu Hanifa called *Tabjeed Al-sahifa* that he attributes to Al-Khateeb are taken from aforementioned book of Al-Imaam Al-Mizzi *Tahdheeb Al-kamal*.

Almost all of what is mentioned in *Tahdheeb Al-kamal* are from the opinions of the master of critism and accreditation[254] are taken from *Kitaab Al-jarh wa Al-ta'deel* of Abu Hatim, from *Al-Kaamil* of Ibn Adi, from *Tarikh Bagdad* of Al-Khateeb and from *Tarikh Dimashq* of Ibn Asaakir.

It is worth noting that Al-Imaam Al-Mizzi doesn't mention anything in his *Tadheeb Al-kamal* except that

245 ilal
246 al-musalsal
247 ghareeb
248 muhtaffun bi al-qaraain
249 musalsal
250 musalsal
251 mashoor
252 mutawatir
253 fard mutlaq
254 al-jarh wa al-ta'deel

which benifits the eminence of Al-Imaam Abu Hanifa. May Allah reward him (Al-Mizzi) for how meticulous he was in his analysis! This should not come as surprise since Al-Dhahabi [another giant of this science] said about Al-Mizzi: "Regarding the science of the narrators [of hadith], he is the ultimate authority and he carries the abenner. No eyes have ever seen anyone like him." Al-Dhahabi praised Al-Mizzi in his "Tadhheeb" in the biography of Abu Hanifa saying: "Our Shaykh Abu Al-Hajjaaj did an excellent job in that he did not narrate anything regarding Abu Hanifa [of the false reports] that might indicate that he was a weak narrator."

Al-Dhahabi narrates in his *Tadhheeb Al-Kamaal* the authentication of Yahya bin Maeen (the master of this science) of Abu Hanifa saying: "Muhammed bin Said Al-Awli said: I heard Yahya bin Maeen say: Abu Hanifa was [a] reliable and trustworthy [narrator]. He did not narrate a hadith except that which he committed to memory. He did not narrate that which he had not [fully] memorized." The hadith master Salih bin Muhammed Al-Asadi said: I heard Yahya bin Maeen say: "Abu Hanifa was a trustworthy narrator in hadith". Ahmad bin Muhammed bin Al-Qaasim bin Muhrij reported from Yahya bin Maeen who said: "Abu Hanifa had no issues as hadith narrator." In another occasion he said: "Abu Hanifa, for us, is of the trustworthy narrators. He cannot be accused of lying."

The Hadith Master Al-Mizzi clearly stated in the introduction to his *Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal* saying: "If we narrate a saying without the chain of transmitters in the active voice, this means that we did not see any problem with the chain. If we narrate a saying without a chain in the passive voice, this means that we find the chain questionable"

From this analysis [of Al-Mizzi], it is clear that the accreditation of Yahya bin Maeen of Abu Hanifa is undoubtedly authentic.

Then we have the hadith master Abu Abdullah Muhammed bin Ahmed bin Othman Al-Dhahabi who says in his *Tahdheeb tahdheeb Al-kamaal*[255]: "Al-Nooman bin Thabit bin Zoota Al-Imaam Abu Hanifa Al-Koofi, the jurist of Iraq and the Imaam of people of Al-ra'y[256] It is said that he is of Persian origin and that he is a descendant of a freed slave of the tribe of Bani Tha'laba. He saw [the Companion] Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him). He narrates from the following hadith masters:

1. Ataa bin Aby Rabah
2. Nafii'
3. Adi bin Thabit
4. Abdurrahman bin Hurmuz Al-A'raj
5. Ikrima
6. Muhaarib bin Deethaar
7. Alqama bin Marthad
8. Salama bin Kuhayl
9. Hammad bin Aby Sulaiman
10. Al-Hakam bin Utayba
11. Abu ja'far Al-Baqir
12. Qatada
13. Amr bin Deenar and many others.

It is said that he also narrated from

14. Al-Shabi
15. Tawoos.

As for those that narrated from him, we have:

1. His son Hammad
2. Hamza Al-Zayyaat
3. Dawood Al-Taai
4. Zufar bin Huzayl
5. Nuh bin Aby Maryam
6. Abu Yusuf the Judge
7. Muhammed bin Al-Hasan [Al-Shaybani]
8. Ibn Al-Mubaarak
9. Abu Yahya Al-Himmani
10. Wakii'
11. Hafs bin Abdurrahman Al-Balkhy

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255 A copy of this book in microfilm is found in the library of the Islamic University in the enlightened Medina. Professor Abdulqayyoom Al-Sindi kindly sent me this biography. May Allah reward him.

256 reasoning

12. Sa'd bin Al-Salt
13. Abu Nu'aym
14. Abu Abdurrahman Al-muqri
15. Al-Hasan bin Ziyaad Al-lului
16. Abu Asim Al-Nabeel
17. Abdurrazzaaq
18. Abdullah bin Musa and many others.

Ahmed Al-I'jli said: "He is of the contemporaries of Hamza Al-Zayyat. He used to sell silk. Muhammed bin Ishaaq Al-Bakkaai narrates on the authority Omar (son of Hammad son of Abu Hanifa) who said: "My ancestor Zuta is from Kabul. [My great grandfather] was born to a Muslim family. [My grandfather] Abu Hanifa used to sell silk. His store is known in the mall of Amr bin Hurayth. It is also said that his ancestors are from Nesaa or from Tirmidh."

It is narrated on the authority of Ismail bin Hammad bin Abu Hanifa who said: "I am Ismail son of Hammad son of Al-Nooman bin Thabit [Abu Hanifa] bin Al-Nooman bin Al-Marzuban of the free sons of Persia. By Allah, my ancestors were never slaves. My grandfather was born in the year 80. [His father] Thabit went to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) when he was still small. Ali (ra) prayed for him and his descendents to be blessed. His father Al-Nooman is the one that gave a present to Ali (ra) the day of Nawruz and said: Our Newruz is everyday.

Salih bin Muhammed Jazara and others said: "We heard Yahya bin Maeen say: "Abu Hanifa is a trustworthy narrator in Hadith". Ahmed bin Muhammed bin Muhriz narrates from Yahya bin Maeen [who said]: "He [Abu Hanifa] does not have any issues[257] [as narrator]" He was trusted by Ibn Hubayra to accept the post of the Supreme Judge in the state and he refused.

Ibn Ka's Al-Nakhai said: "Jafer bin Muhammed bin Hazim informed us saying Al-Waleed bin Hammad narrated to us on the authority of Zufar bin Zuhayl who said: "I heard Abu Hanifa say: "I used to study theology until I became one of the references in that science. We were near the study circle of Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman and a lady came and said: A man had a wife who had a legal status of a slave, he wants to divorce her according to the Sunnah. How can he divorce her? I did not know how to answer her question. I told her to go to Hammad and ask the question then come and tell me what the answer is. She did that and his response was: He divorces her after she finishes her period without having any intimate relation with her. Then he leaves her to go through two periods. Once she takes ritual bath after the second period, she has the right to remarry. She came back and told me Hammad's answer. I said to myself: I am wasting my time with theology. I took my shoes and started attending Hammad's lessons. I used to listen to his verdicts and memorize them. He would [make us] repeat some of the verdicts the following day. His students would make mistakes and I would give the correct response. [After a while], he said: no one sits right next to me in the study circle except Abu Hanifa. I spent 20 years attending his lessons. Then I felt a desire to establish my own study circle. I left home in the evening went to the Masjid but I could not bring myself to abandon his study circle and ended up sitting and listening to him. That evening the news of the death of one of his relatives from Basra came to him. He left behind wealth without any inheritors save Hammad. He asked me to lead the study circle in his absence. As soon as he left, I was asked about various matters that I have never heard the answer from him. I used to respond to the questions and record my answer. He was gone for two months. Upon his return, I presented to him the questions along with my answers. Out of 60 questions total, he [agreed with me over 40 and] disagreed over 20. I swore not to leave him until his death."

Muhammed bin Muzahim said: "I heard Ibn Al-Mubarak say: Had Allah (SW) not succored me with Abu Hanifa and Sufyan, I would have been like the rest of the people. Sulaiman bin Abu Shaykh sadi: "Hujr bin Abduljabbar narrated to me saying it was said to Qasim bin Ma'n Al-Masoody: How would you like to be among Abu Hanifa's pupils? He said: "His study circles are more beneficial than anyone else [among his contemporaries]".

Ahmad bin Sabbaah said: I heard Al-Imaam Al-Shafii say: Malik was asked: Have you see Abu Hanifa? He said yes. He is a man that if he wanted to convince you hat this column is made out of gold, he would be able to prove that to you.

On the authorithy of Rawh who said: I was with Jurayj in the year 150, he heard of the death of Abu Hanifa. He paused and said in agony: What a loss for knowledge?

Dirar bin Sudar said: "Yazid bin Haroon was asked: which one is a better jurist, Abu Hanifa or Sufyan? He said Sufyan is better in hadith and Abu Hanifa is better in jurisprudence.

On the authority of Ibn Al-Mubarak who said: "I have not seen anyone like Abu Hanifa in jurisprudence[258].

257 la ba'sa bihi
258 fiqh

If Abu Hanifa and Sufyan agree [on a subject matter] who can oppose their verdict?

Ibn Al-Mubarak[259] said: "If there is anyone worthy of giving verdict[260] based on legal reasoning[261] that is Abu Hanifa."

Jandai bin Walid narrated that Muhammed bin Bishr reported saying I was attending the study circles of Abu Hanifa and Sufyaan Al-Thawri. When I attended the study circle of Abu Hanifa, he would say where were you? I would say I was attending the study circle of Sufyaan. He would say: You studied with someone that if Alqama and Al-Aswad were here they would need his knowledge. When I attended the study circle of Sufyan, he would say where are you coming from? I would say: from the study circle of Abu Hanifa. He would say: You were with the most knowledgeable jurist on the face of the earth. Bakir bin Yahya bin Zabbaan narrates on the authority of his father who said: Abu Hanifa said to me: O people of Basra, you are more pious than us and we are more knowledgeable in jurisprudence than you are.

On the authority of Shadaad bin Hakeem who said: I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable than Abu Hanifa. On the authority of Makky bin Ibraheem who said: Abu Hanifa was the most knowledgable [jurist] of his time.

Yahya bin Maeen said: I heard Yahya bin Said Al-Qattaan say: By Allah, we have not heard better verdicts than those of Abu Hanifa. We have followed most of his verdicts. Al-Rabee' and others reported from Al-Shafii who said that people are dependent on Abu Hanifa in jurisprudence.

Abu Al-Fadl Abbaas bin Azeez Al-Qattaan said: Harmala informed us saying I heard Al-Shafii say: People are like dependents of the following individuals [in the Islamic sciences]. Whoever wishes to excel in jurisprudence, he is a dependent of Abu Hanifa. Whoever wishes to excel in Islamic History, he is dependent on Ibn Ishaaq. Whoever wishes to excel in the interpretation of the Qur'an, he is dependent on Muqaatil bin Sulaiman. Whoever wants to excel in poetry, he is dependent of Zuhair bin Abi Salma, whoever wants to excel in grammar, and he is dependant on Al-Kisaai.

Hammad bin Quraish narrates on the authority of Asad bin Amr who said: Abu Hanifa prayed the early morning prayer with the ablution of the late night prayer, according to the authentic narration from him, for forty years. Most nights he used to read the entire Qur'an in a single unit of prayer. His cry at night would be heard by his neighbors and they would pity him.

It has been narrated that he finished the recitation of the Qur'an seventy thousand times in the very place that he passed away.

I would say this is a rejected narration. Among its narrators is an unknown individual. It is narrated by the Jurist Muhammed bin Yaqoob Al-Harithy Al-Bukhari followed by the jurist Ahmad bin Al-Husayni Al-Balkhy followed by Hammad who mentioned [it as we know it today].

Al-Harthy also says: Qays bin Abu Qays narrated to us that Muhammed bin Haib Al-Marwazi reported that Ismail bin Hammad bin Abu Hanifa related on the authority of his father who said: when my father (Abu Hanifa) died, Al-Hasan bin Umara asked our permission for giving him a burial bath and he was given the permission. When he washed him, he said: May Allah forgive you and have mercy on you for you fasted [the last thirty] years, you did not sleep at night for forty years. You set the bar too high and put the reciters in shame.

Bishr bin Waleed reports on the authority of Abu Yusuf who said: "While I was walking with Abu Hanifa, I heard a man say to another: This is Abu Hanifa who doesn't sleep at night. Abu Hanifa said: By Allah, I will not have people talk about me with that which is untrue. So, he started spending the night with prayer, supplication and other rites."

Muhammed bin Ali bin Affan said: "Ali bin Hafs Al-Bazzaar narrated saying: I heard Hafs bin Abdurrahmaan [who said] I heard Misar say: "I entered a Masjid one night and I saw a man praying. He read one-seventh of the Qur'an. I said now he will bow down, then he read one-third of the Qur'an then he read half of the Qur'an. He went on finishing the entire Qur'an in one unit of prayer. Then I noticed it was Abu Hanifa."

On the authority of Kharija bin Musab who said" Four people finished the entire Qur'an in one unit of prayer. They are Othman [bin Afwaan], Tameem Al-Daari, Said bin Jubair and Abu Hanifa. On the authority of Yahya bin Nasr who said: Abu Hanifa may have finished the Qur'an in Ramadan sixty times.

Sulaiman bin Rabee said: Hibbaan bin Musa related saying I heard ibn Al-Mubarak say: I came to Kufa and asked about the most pious resident, they responded Abu Hanifa. Sulaiman also said: I heard Makki bin Ibraheem say: I associated with the people of Kufa and I did not see anyone more pious than Abu Hanifa. Hammad bin

259 Abu Arooba said: "I heard Salama bin Shabeeb, who said I heard Abdurrazzaaq who said I heard Ibn Al-Mubarak say…

260 fatwa

261 qiyaas

Adam said: I heard Ibn Al-mubaarak say: I did not see anyone more pious than Abu Hanifa. He was tried with lashes and wealth [and did not give in].

On the authority of Ubaidillah bin Omar Al-Riqqi who said: Ibn Hubayra asked Abu Hanifa to assume the position of [suprime] judge of the city of Kufa, he refused. He was hit with 10 lashes a day for 11 days. When Ibn Hubayra saw the resoluteness of Abu Hanifa, he let him go.

Sulaiman bin Abi Shaykh said: Al-Rabii bin Asim narrated to me saying: Yazeed bin Omar bin Hubayra sent me to bring Abu Hanifa and I did. He wanted him to be in charge of the treasury and he refused. He was hit many times for this refusal.

On the Authority of Mougheeth bin Badeel, Kharija bin Musaab said that the Caliph Al-Mansoor authorized 10,000 dirham to be given to Abu Hanifa. He was sent for to come and receive the sum. He consulted with me (Kharija bin Musaab) and said: This is a kind of person that if I refuse to take this money he will be angry with me. I told him that this is a large sum of money in his eyes. When you are summoned to take the money, say that you weren't hoping to receive such a great sum from the prince of the believers (Caliph). He was called to get the money and he said as I recommended. When the Caliph heard that, he withheld the money from Abu Hanifa.

Muhammed bin Abdulhakeem Al-Daqiqi said: "I heard Yazeed bin Haroon say: Of all the people I saw, I did not see anyone smarter, more pious or better than Abu Hanifa"

Muhammaed bin Abdullah Al-Ansari said: "The genius of Abu Hanifa could be seen in his reasoning, walking, entering and leaving".

Sahl bin Othman said: "Ismail bin Hammad bin Abi Hanifa narrated to us saying: We had a neighbor who was a miller. He was a Rafidzy and owned two mules. He named one of them (God forbid!) Abu Bakr and the other Omar. One of them hit and killed him one night. Abu Hanifa said: "Go and see if the one that killed him was called Omar. They did and it was the case.

Yaqoob bin Shoayba said that some of our companions dictated to me these verses of ibn Al-Mubaarak:

I used to see Abu Hanifa often	He was getting better day by day
He would utter the truth	Whenever wrongdoers came with falsehood
If you compared him to others	You would find him peerless
It was enough of a calamity	That we lost Hammad [his teacher]
The joy of our enemies shortlived	As Abu Hanifa built a castle of knowledge
When I saw him asked a question	He responded as if he had an ocean to pour from
When the scholars were helpless	He was the one with answers

Nasr bin Ali narrated on the authority Al-Khuratbi who said: "The people, who are against Abu Hanifa, are divided into two, namely the jealous and the ignorant. For me, the ignorant ones are the better of the two. Yahya bin Ayyoob said: I heard Yazeed bin Haroon say: Abu Hanifa is just like any other human being. He makes mistakes just like everyone does and he gets things right just as every human is capable of doing.

Abu Hanifa passed away in Baghdad. Said bin Ghufayr and others said that his passing was in the month of Rajab in the year 150. Whoever claimed that he passed away in the year 151 or 153, was mistaken. On the authority of Al-Hasan bin Yusuf who said that six funeral prayers were held for Abu Hanifa due to the number of people attending.

Al-Tirmidhi narrates in his *Al-Ilal* from Abu Hanifa [indirectly] who said: "I did not see anyone better than Ataa". Aws said: Al-Nasaai narrates from Abu Hanifa in his *Al-Sunaan Al-Kubra* in the chapter of "Intercourse with an animal". Al-Nasai says: Ali bin Hujr narrated to us that Isa bin Yunus reported on the authority of Al-Nooman, that is Abu Hanifa, from Asim who is Ibn Bahdala, from Abu Zareen, from Ibn Abbaas who said: The capital punishment is not applied to the one who has intercourse with an animal"

I [Al-Dhahabi] would say how appropriate was the doing of our teacher Abu Al-Hajjaj who did not report anything that would imply that Abu Hanifa is a weak narrator"

This is what was mentioned by the great scholar, Hadith Master, most famous Muhaddith of his time, last of the Hadith masters, the historian of Islam, Shams Al-deen Abu Abdullah Muhammed bin Ahmed bin Othman bin Qaymaz Al-Turkmani Al-Dimashqi (may Allah have Mercy on his soul) in the biography of Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on his soul)

The great scholar, hadith master, historian Abu Al-Mahasin Muhammed bin Ali bin Al-Hasan bin Al-Husaini in his book: *Al-Tadhkira bi ma'rifat rijal Al-ashara*[262] which are the six famous hadith collection (Al-kotob Al-sitta),

262 A copy of this book in microfilm is found in the libarary of Al-Jamia AlIslamiyya in the enlightened city of Medina under the number 123. Professor Masood Ahmad Al-Sayyid was kind enough to send the biography of the Imam [founmd in this book] to me. May

Al-Muwatta, Musnad of Imaam Ahmad, Musnad of Al-Shafii and Musnad of Abu Hanifa.

"فع,أ,ت,ن"[263]: Al-Nooman bin Thabit Al-Taymi, Abu Hanifa Al-Koofi, the jurist of people of Iraq and the Imaam of the people of Al-Ra'y. It is said that he is of Persian origin.

He saw the companion Anas bin Maalik and narrated from Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman, Ataa, Asim bin Abu Al-Najood, Al-Zohri, Qatada, Abu Al-Zobair, Muhammed bin Al-Munkadir, Abu Jafar Al-Bakqir, Al-Shabi and others.

As for those who narrated from him, we have his son Hammad, Wakii bin Al-Jarrah, Isa bin Yunus, Abdurrazzaq, Abu Yususf Al-Qadi, Muhammed bin Al-Hasan, Zufar bin Al-Huzayl and many others.

Al-Ujayli said: He was a Koofian and Taymiyan of the contemporaries of Hamza Al-Zayyat and was a silk dealer. He used to sell silk.

Muhammed bin Said Al-Awfi said: "I heard Yahya bin Maeen say: "Abu Hanifa was a trustworthy narrator[264] he would only narrate the hadith that he had fully committed to memory. He would never narrate that which he had not memorized fully." Once he said: He [Abu Hanifa] was among the truthful narrators and was not accused of lying. He was forced by Ibn Hubayra by way of lashes to be the judge of Kufa and he refused.

Dirar bin Surad said: Yazid bin Haaron was asked: "Who is more knowledgeable in jurisprudence, Abu Hanifa or Sufyan? He said Sufyan knows more Hadith and Abu Hanifa is more knowledgeable in Jurisprudence. Ibn Al-Mubarak said: "I have not seen anyone like him [Abu Hanifa] in jurisprudence. If Abu Hanifa and Sufyan agree [on a subject matter] who can oppose their verdict!

Makki bin Ibrahim said: "Abu Hanifa was the most knowledgeable of his time. I intermingled with the residents of Kufa and did not see anyone more pious than him."

Ibn Maeen said: "I heard Yahya bin Al-Qattan say: By Allah I have not come across any verdicts better than those of Abu Hanifa. We have adopted most of his views. Ibn Maeen said: "Yahya bin Said would go to the scholars of Kufa for verdict. He would choose among all of them the verdicts of Abu Hanifa. [If there are differences between the views of Abu Hanifa and his students], he would follow those of Abu Hanifa.

Al-Rabii narrates on the authority of Al-Shafii who said: "Abu Hanifa was asked about a man who eats, drinks and involves in intimate relationship with his wife through the night until dawn. There was a man in the study circle who said: What happens if dawn comes in the middle of the night? Abu Hanifa said to him: It is better for you to keep quiet O lame!

Abu Yusuf said: While I was walking with Abu Hanifa I heard a man say: "This is Abu Hanifa who doesn't sleep at night. Abu Hanifa said: By Allah I will not have people talk about me in a way that is not true. So, he used to spend the night praying, supplicating and performing other pious acts.

Abu Naeem and many others said that Abu Hanifa was born in the year 80 and died in the year 150. Ibn Maeen said that he died in the year 151 and others said in the year 153.

The trustworthy Hadith Master Abu Al-Hajjaj Yusuf bin Al-Zaki Abdurrahman Al-MIzzi[265] said Abu Hanifa reported on the authority of Abi Al-Zuhair from Jabir bin Abdullah from the Prophet (pbuh) who said: Whoever sells a wealthy slave, his wealth belongs to the seller unless the buyer makes it a condition stating otherwise" narrated by "D[266]" in sales and by "N" in emancipation and in conditions from Ata bin Jabir.

The great Imam Sibt bin Al-Ajami Burhaneddeen Abu Al-Wafaa Ibrahim bin Muhammed bin Khaleel Al-Trablusi [than] Al-Halabi Al-Shafii, the master of Halab without doubt, saying in his *book Nihaayat al Sool Fi Rijal Sitta Al-Usool*[267]

(T,S) Al-Nooman bin Thanit bin Zoota Ksulma, the independent jurist and eponyms, Abu Hanifa Al-Kufi, the jurist of Iraq, the leader of people of Al-Ra'y. It is said that he is of Persian origin. He is a descendant of a freed slave of the tribe of Banu Taymillah bin Thakaba. As for Zoota, he is from Kabool. Thabit was born to a Muslim family. Zoota was a slave of the tribe of Benu Taymillah bin Thalaba then he was emancipated and became freed

Allah reward him for this benevolent act.

263 These are acronyms that he used for for different scholars. عف for Imaam Al-Shafii, أ for Imaam Ahmad, ت for Imaam Al-Tirmidhy and ن Imaam Al-Nasaai.

264 thiqa

265 The trustworthy Hadit Master Abu Al-Hajjaj Yusuf bin Al-Zaki Abdurrahman Al-MIzzi informed us by way of recitation in the year 740 saying: Al-Zahid Abu Ishaq Ibraahim bin Ali bin Al-Wasiti related to us saying: ABu Ali AlHasan bin Ishaq bin Al-Jawaligi reported to us saying Abu Bakr MUhammed bin Ubaidillah Al-Zhaghuni informed us saying Abu Al-Qasim Ali bin Ahmad Al-Bandar reported to us saying Hamid Muhammed bin Harun Al-Khadrami related to us saying Yusuf bin Musa reported saying Wakii reported saying…

266 It is not clear what D and N stand for. Perhaps Abu Dawood ans Al-Nasaai. Allah knows best [Tr]

267 In "Lahdzat Al-Alhadz bi dhayli tadhkiraat Al-huffadh" the name of the book is given as "Ghayat Al-sool". A microfilm copy of this book exists in the library of Al-Jamiat Al-Islamiyya in the enlightened cith of Medina. Professor Masood Ahmad Al-Sayyid Al-Mooqir was kind enough to send me a copy of the biography if Imaam Abu Hanifa found in this book, may Allah reward him. However, the handwriting is very difficult to read and some of the lines are missing from the microfilm making some sections nearly unlegible.

slave[268] of the same tribe. Ismail, the grandson of Abu Hanifa, said I am Ismail bin Hammad bin Al-Nooman bin Thabit bin Al-Nooman bin Al-Marzooban, descendant of free Persian origin. By Allah, my family had never been enslaved. Abu Hanifa was a silk merchant and his store was known in the mall of Amr bin Hurayth.

Abu Nuaym Al-Fadl bin Dukhayn said: Abu Hanifa is originally from Kabul. Abu Abdurrahman Al-Moqri said: Abu Hanifa was from Babil. Yahya bin Nasr Al-Qurashy said: Father of Abu Hanifa was from Nasaa. Al-Harith bin Idreeth said: Abu Hanifa is originally from Thirmidh. Ishaq bin Al-Baghlool said (reporting from his father), Thabit, the father of Abu Hanifa, is from Al-Anbar.

Abu Hanifa saw Anas [bin Malik, the companion.] He was contemporary to four companions, as was said by Abu Ishaaq Al-Fayroozabadi. They are Anas, Abdullah bin Abu Awfa, Sahl bin Said and Abu Al-Tufayl. He did not narrate from anyone of them. It said that he narrated from Al-Shaabi and Tawoos.

We have narrated from the supreme judge Jamaladdeen Mahmood bin Ahmad bin Al-Siraj that Abu Hanifa narrated from seven companions. He compiled their names in a poem and wrote a booklet called, as was narrated, "Abu Hanifa's direct narrations from the Companions". I saw with some of the distinguished Hanefi Scholars a collection of Abu Hanifa's direct narrations from the companions narrated by Molla Yaqoob.

Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdadi says in his *History of Baghdaad*: He saw Anas bin Malik, he heard from Ata bin Abi Rabah, Abu Ishaaq Al-Shaabi, Muharib bin Dithaar, Al-Haytham bin Habeeb Al-Sawwaaf, Qeesa bin Muslim, Muhammed bin Al-Munkadir, Nafii, freed slave of Ibn Omar, Hisham bin Urwa, Yazeed Al-Faqeer, Simaak bin Harb, Alqqmq bin Murthad, Atiyya Al-Awfi, Abdulazeez bin Rufay, Abdulkareem Abu Umayya and others.

Those that narrate from Abu Hanifa are: Abu Yahya Al-Himmani, Hushaym bin Basheer, Abbaad bin Al-Awwama, Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak, Wakii bin Al-Jarrah, Yazeed bin Haroon, Ali bin Asim, Yahya bin Nasr, Abu Yusuf Al-Qaadi, Muhammed bin Al-Hasan, Amr bin Muhammed Al-Anqazi, Hawdhat bin Khaalifa, Abu Abdurrahman Al-Muqri, Abdurrazzaaq bin Hammam and others.

He is from Kufa. Abu Jafar Al-Mansoor moved him to Baghdaad. Al-Shaykh Abu Ishaaq said in his collection of biographies: He was born in the year 70 and died in the year 150 at the age of 80 in Baghdaad.

He studied jurisprudence under Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman. His virtues are many as found in the books. Known are his prayers, worship and his continence[269]. Stand-alone books have been authored dedicated to his virtues.

The correct view is that he died in prison. Abu Jafar Al-Mansoor wanted to appoint him as a judge and he refused and was imprisoned. His story is known and famous in the books. May Allah have mercy on his soul." This is the end of the quote from Sabt bin Al-Ajmi Al-Burhaan Al-Halabi Al-Shafii.

We find that similar statement to those of Al-Mizzi, Al-Aqeeda, Al-Husayni and Al-Burhan Al-Halabi was made by Shaykh Al-Islaam Shihaab Al-Deen Abu Al-Fadl, Ahmad bin Ali Al-Asqalani Al-shafii Al-Hafidz ibn Hajar, the leader of the hadith master of his time, the hadith master of the land of Egypt (may Allah have mercy on his soul). He did not record in his *Tadheeb Al-tahdheeb* anything regarding Abu Hanifa that can necessitate that Abu Hanifa was a weak narrator.

Al-Mizzi, Al-Dhahabi, Al-Iraaqy and Ibn Hajar are the ones about whom Al-Imaam Al-Hafidh Jalaladdeen Al-Suyooti says in his *Dhayl Thadhkiraat Al-Huffadh*: The Haidth scholar are like the children of the following four masters in the hadith science including the accreditation of the narrators. Al-Mizzi, Al-Iraaqi, Al-Dhahabi and Ibn Hajar." The great Imaam hadith master Imad Al-Deen ibn Katheer Abu Al-Fida Ismaeel bin Omar bin Katheer Al-Dimashqi Al-Shafii (may Allah have mercy on his soul) has included a biography of Abu Hanifa in his *Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya* where he only speaks well of him. He says under the heading "Those that passed away in the year 150": "In the year 150, the Imaam Abu Hanifa died. His full name is Al-Nooman bin Thabit Al-Taymi (he was a descendant of a freed slave of Banu Taym tribe). He was from Iraaq and was the jurist of Iraq. He was one of the independent jurists[270] of Islam. He was one of the pillars of Islamic scholarship and one of the four eponhyms that has followers to this day. He is the most senior of the four ephonyms. He reached the time of companions. He saw Anas bin Malik. It is said that he saw other companions as well. Some have said that he narrated from seven companions. Allah knows best.

He narrated from a group of followers among them are Al-Hakim, Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman, Salama bin Kuhayl, Amir Al-Shabi, Ikrima, Ataa, Qatada, Al-Zohri, Nafii, freed slave of Ibn Omar, Yahya bin Said Al-Ansari and Abu Ishaq Al-Shaabi.

Those who narrated from him include, his son Hammad, Ibraheem bin Tahman, Ishaq bin Yusuf Al-Azraq,

268 mawla
269 zuhd
270 mujtahid mutlaq

Asab bin Amr Al-Qaadi, Hasan bin Ziyaad Al-Lului, Hamzat Al-Zayyat, Dawood Al-Taai, Zufar, Abdurrazzaq, Abu Nuaym, Muhammed bin Al-Hasan Al-Shaybani, Hushaym, Wakii and Abu Yusuf Al-Qadi.

Yahya bin Maeen said [Abu Hanifa] was a trustworthy narrator[271] . He was of the truthful people[272] . He was not accused of [ever] lying. Ibni Hubayra punished him and forced him to accept a post as a judge but he refused. Yahya bin Said would choose his verdict [over others]. Yahya used to say: By Allah, we have not heard better verdicts than those of Abu Hanifa. We have adopted most of his views. Abdullah bin Mubarak said: Had Allah not help me by way of Abu Hanifa and Sufyaan Al-Thawri, I would have been just like any other operson.

Abdullah Dawood Al-Khuraybi said: people must supplicate for Abu Hanifa in their prayers for he has preserved for them the Sunnah and the jurisprudence[273] . Sufyaan Al-Thawri and Ibn Al-Mubaarak said: Abu Hanifa was the most knowlaedgable jurist of his time on the face of the earth. Abu Nuaym said: He had the profound knowledge of legal issues[274]. Makky bin Ibrahim said: He was the most knowledgable [jurist] on the face of the earth [in his time].

The author of *Al-Mishkah* Al-Shaykh Al-Imaam Waliyyuddeen Muhammed bin Abdullah Al-Khateeb Al-Tabrizi Al-Shafii makes similar statements in his *Asma Al-Rijaal* about Abu Hanifa when he says: "Shareek Al-Nakhai said: Abu Hanifa would speak very little, contemplate a lot, and would not talk with people often. This is the clearest sign of the one who is busy with the matters of religion. Whosoever talks less and listens more and is detached from the ephemeral pleasure of the world, he has been given all the [humanly] knowledge. If we start listing his virtues, it will make this book much longer and that is not what we set out to do, He would practice what he preached. He was a pious and obstinent worshipper. He reached to the level of an eponhym in the Islamic sciences. We make a mention of him in this book even if we have not recorded any of his narrations in our book of Al-Mishkat in order to draw belessing here due to his elevated spiritual stature and the abundance of his knowledge"

Prior to the aoforementioned scholars, the Imaam, great hadith master [the carrier of the banner] of the friends of Allah, Muhyiddin Abu Zakariyya Yahya bin Sharaf bin Murri Al-Hizaami Al-Hawrani [Al-Nawawi] Al-Shafii (may Allah have mercy on his soul) mentions Imam Abu Hanifa in his *Tahdheeb Al-asma wa Al-loghaat*. He does not mention him except for his virtues, his praises, his knowledge and his piety.

Before him, we have the distinguished expert scholar, Judge Majd Al-Deen Abu Al-Saadat Al-Mubaarak bin Muhammed bin Al-Shaybani Al-Jazari Al-Mawsili Al-Shafii, better known as Ibn Al-Atheer (died in 606) the author *Jami Al-Usool*, "Al-Nihaya fi gharaib Al-hadith wa Al-Athar" where he included the biography of Imaam [Abu Hanifa] in the third section of his book *Jami Al-usool*[275] and he praises him greatly and refutes the arguments of his oponents saying : "Al-Nooman bin Thabit: He is Abu Hanifa Al-Nooman bin Thabit bin Zoota bin Marzubaan, the kufian Imaam and Jurist [from the decendents of] a freed slave of Taymillah bin Thaalaba. He is of the contemporaries of Hamzat Al-Zayyaat. He was a silk trader and used to sell silk. He is mentioned in *Al-Ishaar* in the book of pilgrimage. His grandfather was from Kabul. It is said also that he was from Babylon. Some said he was from Al-Anbar. He was a slave of Taymillah bin Thalaba and was later emancipated. Abu Hanifa's father was born to a Muslim family.

Abu Hanifa's grand son Ismail said: I am Ismail bin Hammad bin Nooman bin Thabit bin Nomaan bin Marzubaan of the descendents of free Persians. By Allah, we have never experienced slavery. My grandfather never experienced slavery. My grandfather was born in the year 80 and his father Thabit went to Ali bin Abu Talib (ra) when he was small he asked for blessings for him and his descendants. We hoped that Allah (SW) has accepted this wish of Ali (ra).

Abu Hanifa was born in the year 80 and died in the year 150 in Baghdad. It is said that he died in the year 151 or 153. The first is the most probable date. He was buried in the graveyard of Al-Khayzoran and his grave is known to this date.

There were four companions alive at the time of Abu Hanifa: Anas bin Malik in Basra, Abdullah bin Abu Awfa in Kufa, Sahl bin Said in Medina and Abu Al-Tufayl Ammar bin Wathila in Mecca. He did not meet any of them nor did he hear from any of them. His students say that he met a number of companions and narrated from them but this is not confirmed by the experts[276].

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271 thiqa

272 min ahl al-sidq

273 fiqh

274 al-masaail al-fiqhiyya

275 I saw a hand-written copy of this book with clear writing in the collection of Muhammed Ibad Tonk from the Amal of Rajobotana in India. The Shaykh, Scholar Imran Khan bin Irfan Khan Al-Tonki (may Allah have mercy on his soul) has kindly send us this biography. May Allah reward him for this.

276 The great scholar Shamsuddeen Al-Qahistani says in the introduction of his book called "Jami Al-mumuz Sharh mukhtasar Al-wiqayay Al-musamma bi Al-nuqaya" in volume 1 page 6 that was published in Kalkata in the year 1284 : "Verily Imam Abu Hanifa is

He studied jurisprudence[277] from Hammad bin Abu Sulaiman. He narrated from Ata bin Abi Rabah, Abu Ishaaq Al-Sabii, Muhaarib bin Datheer, Al-Haytham bin Habeeb, Muhammed bin Al-Munkadeer, Nafii[278], Hisham bin Urwa and SImak bin Harb. Those who narrated from him are: Abdullah bin Mubarak, Wakii bin Al-Jarrah, Yazeed bin Haroon, Ali bin Asim, Al-Qadi Abu Yusuf, Muhammed bin Al-Hasan Al-Shaybani and others.

Al-Mansoor moved him from Kufa to Baghdaad. He settled there the rest of his life. Ibn Hubaira forced him during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph Marwan bin Muhammed to be the judge of Kufa and he refused. He was hit with 10 lashes for the following 10 days. When he saw the determination of the Imaam, he let him go.

When Al-Mansoor had him settle in Baghdaad, he wanted him to be the judge and he refused. The Caliph swore that he will become judge. Abu Hanifa swore that he won't become one. They kept challenging each other until Al-Mansoor imprisoned him and he died in prison. It is said that he earned his freedom for accepting [to work a humiliating job for him] to count bricks but this is a fabricated story.

He was of average height. Some said he was tall. He had a tan skin and was handsome. There was a sweetness to his speech. His company was sought after. He was extremely generous and was kind to his fellow Muslims.

Imaam Al-Shafii said that [Imam] Malik was asked if he saw Imam Abu Hanifa. He said yes. I saw him who if he wanted to convince you that this pillar is from gold he would be able to come up with the convincing evidence. Imam Al-Shafii also said: "Whoever wants to attain profound knowledge of jurisprudence he will be a dependent of Abu Hanifa".

If we were to start detailing his virtues we would have to keep writing pages and pages and even then we wouldn't be done. He was a pious, righteous great scholar of Islamic sciences pre-occupied with learning and staying away from earthly desires and temptations.

Various sayings are attributed to him but he is far above and innocent of all those accusations such as the statement that the Qur'an is created[279] , denying divine determination[280] , the belief in Al-Irja[281] and other falsehood that are incorrectly attributed to him. There is no need to mention the complete list nor is there a need to mention the owner of these falsehoods, for Imam [Abu Hanifa] is clearly innocent of those accusations.

The fact that Allah (SW) spread his fame far and wide on earth and that half of the Muslim world worships their Lord according to his school and that his opinions and verdicts are often referenced in our day 440 years after his passing is the most compelling evidence that the Imaam is innocent of all the nonsensical statements attributed to him.

This is the most compelling evidence of veracity of his school of thought and his creed[282] and that he is free from all falsehood disseminated about him.

Abu Jafar Al-Tahawi, who is among the most eminent followers of his, authored a book called: Creed of Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) which in fact is the creed of the Islamic nation[283] . There is nothing in that book of the sort that the Imam is accused of. Furthermore, his students and followers know him better than the outsiders. In case of conflicting reports, his students' statements should carry heavier weight than those who are not associated with his school[284].

It has been mentioned as to why some people made about the Imam unacceptable statements. There is no need for us to mention what they said for verily the likes of Abu Hanifa needs no defence against such falsehood. Allah knows best.

Ahead of all of the aforementioned authors, the eminent Hadith Master the crown of Islam Abu Said Abdulkarim Alsamani Al-Marwazi Al-Shafii wrote a very positive biography were he mentioned Abu Hanifa's virtues

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from the followers (tabeen). He saw Anas bin Maalik as it was reported by Al-Shaykh Al-Jazari when he mentiones the names of expert rteciters. (Qurraa). He counts him among the serious expert reciters (min akabir Al-Qurraa) in his "Kashf Al-Kashshaaf" in Surat Al-Noor. What is claimed [above] in "Jami Al-Usool" that it is not certain that he met a companion is not taken to be seriously. For the author himself says at the end that the students (followers) of the Imaam would know their imam better than anyone else and that their statement would be the last word regarding this matter.

The great scholar Al-Qahistani Muhammal Shamooldeen Al-Mufti in Bukhara, among the foremost scholar of Islam, was a scholar, an Imaam, ocean of knowledge and obstinant. It is said that he never forgot anything that he heard [or read]. His biography is found in "Shadharaat Al-Dhahab" among the deseased in the year 953 .

277 fiqh

278 freed slave of Ibn Omar (ra)

279 khalq al-Qur'an

280 al-qawl bi al-qadar

281 The belief that as long as one is a believer, sins and disobedience has no consequences.

282 aqida

283 ahl al-aunnah wa al-jamaah

284 I maam Ibn Al-Qayyim says in his: I'laam Al-muwaqqieen volume 3 page 222: "What is a must on the one upon whom Allah SW bestowed the blessing of Islam, is that when a weak narration comes to him regarding one of the Eponyms (Imams), he should not mention it to Imam's followers and he should be quiet about it even if he is convinced of its authenticity otherwise he should not accept it . Much of what is narrated about the Imam are false" Abdulfattah

and accomplishments and he made no mention of any shortcomings.

Following the footsteps of the aforementioned scholars are those that came after those of the eminent Hadith masters and others among the prominent scholars of Islam who authored biographies of Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah be pleased be with him) and filled those biographies with his virtues, his elevated eminent status and the profound knowledge of Islamic sciences, his piety and knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah as well as application of this knowledge in his life.

I will quote here from one of the prominent scholars of the 11th century by the name of Ibn Allaan, Muhammed bin Ibraheem Al-Siddiqi Al-Alawi Al-Shafii, the rejuvenator of the prophetic tradition in the land of Hijaz and one of the interpreters Qur'an and Hadith expert of the locality, who was born in 996 and died in the year 1057 (may Allah have mercy on him). He included a short biography of Abu Hanifa in his book called *Al-Fotohaat Al-Rabbaaniyya ala adhkaar Al-Nawawi* where he says: "The Imaam Abu Hanifa, the greatest of the Imaams[285] , the unique noble landmark scholar, teacher of the Imaams whose elevated status is agreed upon unanimously as well as the abundance of his knowledge. He is recognized as the one who surpassed his contemporaries in spiritual[286] as well as practical[287] sciences. In addition we find a very good mention of him among the great scholars of the followers[288]. His full name is Al-Nooman bin Thabit bin Zuta bin Marzuban of the descendants of Taymillah bin Thalaba Al-Koofi.

Al-Khateeb narrates with its chain of transmission from the grandson of the Imaam, Omar the son of Hammad the son of Abu Hanifa, that Thabit [father of the Imaam] was born to a Mulsim family and Zuta was a slave to the tribe of Bani Taym and they emancipated him. He became their freed slave. Imaam's [other] grandson and Omar's brother Islmail denied this story and said that the father of Thabit [grandfather of the Imaam] was a free man of Persian origin. He said Zuta went with his son Thabit to Ali bin Abi Taalib (ra) while Thabit was very small. Ali (ra) prayed for the young Thabit and his descendants to be blessed. We hoped that Allah SW had accepted his prayer for our family"

I would say that as Ismaeel son of Hammad son of Abu Hanifa wished, Allah (SW) accepted the prayer of Ali (ra) and bestowed tremendous amount of blessing upon his grandfather [Abu Hanifa]. Allah (SW) blessed his students and followers. The fact that his school is spread far and wide results in a great number of Muslims [more than half of the Muslim world] following his school is a proof that Allah (SW) accepted his work.

He studied jurisprudence under Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman and was a contemporary to either four or eight companions. Among them are Anas, Abdullah bin Abi Awf, Sahl bin Sa'd, Abu Al-Tufayl (may Allah be pleased with them). Someone collected the names of the companions that Abu Hanifa met in the following poem:

Abu Hanifa is the ornament of the followers[289]
Narrated from Jabir, Ibn Jaz' and Al-Rida Anas
And from Muayqil, Hurayth[290] and Wasila
And from bint Ajrad and collected the knowledge of the righteous

It is also said that he did not meet any of the companions. He narrated from Ataa and his equals, of those narrated from him are Ibn Al-Mubaarak, Waki bin Al-Jarrah and others.

The Caliph Al-Mansoor requested him to be a judge and he refused. He insisted on his request, when Abu Hanifa refused, he was imprisoned and he died there (may Allah be pleased with him).

Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak said regarding him: Do you recall a man who was offered the world with all its glory and he ran away from it?

He used to dress up and wear perfume [regularly]. His coming would be known from his perfume. He was pleasant to be around and was very generous. He would treat fellow Muslims well. He was of average height. It is also said that he was tall, well-spoken and had a nice voice.

He [Abu Hanifa] said I came to Basra and I thought I would be able to answer every question. I was asked questions for which I had no answers. I promised myself not to depart the study circle of Hammad until he died. I was with him for 18 years. Since then, I have never made my prayer[291] except that I supplicated for him along with my parents. I ask forgiveness for my teachers as well as students.

Sahl bin Muzahim said: The world was offered to Abu Hanifa and he did not want it. He was complled by

285 al-Imaam al-a'dham
286 batini
287 dhahiri
288 tabeen
289 tabeeen
290 That is Amr bin Hurayth Al-Makhzoomi (may Allah be pleased with him)
291 salah

way of punishment to accept a post [as a judge] but he refused.

He was a merchant used to sell silk. His store was in the mall of Amr bin Hurayth.

When the news of his death reached Ibn Jurayj, he was in agony and said: "What a loss!"

Fudayl bin Iyaad said:-Enough for you [O reader] is the testimony of this giant [of Islamic Scholarship] in favor of Abu Hanifa- He was well known in jurisprudence[292], famous for his piety, he had extensive knowledge, he was gracious, patient and steadfast in attaining knowledge day and night, spoke very little unless a question was posed regarding a matter if it is permissible or prohibited.

His virtues are many. [Here are some examples]…

When Hasan bin Umara, who was the judge of Baghdaad, gave him the burial bath, said to him: May Allah forgive you. You have fasted continuously for the last 30 years. You did not experience comfortable sleep for the last 40 years.

Abu Hanifa was born in the year 80 and died in Baghdaad in 150 in prison for having refused to assume the post of a supreme judge according to the most accepted view. Some narrators have it that he died in the year 151 or 153 in the month of Rajab. His grave is in Baghdaad and frequently visited. Among his virtues, as was expressed by Imaam Al-Shafii: "People are like descendants and children of Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) when it comes to jurisprudence."

The Hadith Masters and critics, Imaams of accreditation and criticism[293], did not mention anything in their work of the sort put forth by his enemies and ruthless opponents of criticism and smear campaign.

From the approach taken by the aforementioned scholars of highest eminence, it has become clear as day that what is mentioned in some of the biographical encyclopedias[294] of his criticism have no better place to be put in than a dust bin.

No doubt that those who criticized his verdicts that they are either ignorant of the evidences he used or they cannot fathom the sophisticated methodology used by the Imaam (may Allah be pleased with him) in reaching that conclusion. The righteous predecessors as well as those that followed them have unanimously agreed upon the fact that he had abundance of knowledge, that he was pious, that he spend hours worshiping that he was genius in extracting rulings from the secret texts. The statements of his enemies are stemming from either their ignorance or envy and so they make statements that are foolish and of no value.

Verily Al-Imaam Abdulwahhaab Al-Sharaani (may Allah have mercy on him) has spoken the truth when he said in his *Al-Meezan Al-Kubra* (volume 1 page 54 and 55). As for the view of the four Imaams regarding the blameworthiness of [preferring] opinion [over text], first of them that is innocent of any opinion that goes against the sacred law[295] is the greatest Imaam[296] Abu Hanifa Al-Nooman bin Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him) contrary to what is attributed by some ill-mannered partisans of other schools. How can they face the Imaam in the hereafter with a straight face after having spread this falsehood. How scandalous of a meeting it will be if it happens. Whoever has a clean hart, cannot dare to badmouth any of the Eponyms[297].

There is no comparison between the Imaam and those that badmouth them. The Imaams are like the stars in the sky. Others are like the inhabitants of the earth that know nothing about the stars but their reflections on the water.

Al-Shaykh Muhyiddeen narrated in his *Al-Futuhaat Al-Makkiyyaah* with a chain of transmission to Imaam Abu Hanifa (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: "Do not go by your opinion in the religion of Allah. You must follow the Prophetic tradition (Sunnah). Whoever strays away from Sunnah will surely be misguided."

He (may Allah have mercy on him) also said in volume 1 page 29: "The scholars are the trustees of the sacred law on earth after the Prophet (pbuh). The [ordinary] people are not in a position to oppose their explanation and the rules they derive from the sacred texts. Especially regarding Abu Hanifa, it is not befitting for anyone to oppose him for he is the most magnificent of the Eponyms and first to establish his school.

He has the shortest chain to the Prophet (pbuh) having witnessed the greatest imams among the followers (may Allah be pleased with them all).

How is it permissible for people like us to oppose the greatest of the Imaams.[298] The Muslim nation has unanimous agreement about his eminence, knowledge, piety, hermitage, politeness, worship, constant awareness of

292 fiqh
293 al-jarh wa al-ta'deel
294 kutoob al-rijaal
295 sharia
296 al-Imaam al-aadzaam
297 Imaams
298 al-Imaam al-a'azham

the presence of Allah (SW), his fear of Allah (SW) all his life.

The slightest disrespect or enmity to these great Imaams can only come from ignorance and narrowmindedness.

You must never be one of those who insult the Imaams and attack them. If you do, you will be a looser in this world and the next. Verily, Imaam Abu Hanifa was a strict follower of the Qur'an and Sunna and was innocent of following [mare] opinion [contrary to the sacred texts] as we have already made it clear in various places in this book.

Whoever studies Abu Hanifa's school will find it to be most cautious of the schools in the religion vis-à-vis issuance of verdicts. Whoever claims otherwise is of the most ignoramus rigid partisan, narrow-minded opponents of the Imaam based on their ill-understanding. It is unfathomable for likes of Abu Hanifa, the greatest of the Imaams, to leave the Qur'an and Sunnah and follow opinion. Rather, he is a great Imaam with the greatest number of followers and [God willing] it will be the case until the day of judgement where some schools may not make it.

He gains more and more followers with the passage of time. They are convinced of and satisfied with his verdicts and those of his students and their students. We have already quoted the saying of our Imaam that all are children and dependents of Abu Hanifa in jurisprudence[299].

Some of his followers were punished and were compelled to follow other schools but they refused and the transgression of the wrongdoers was in vain.

The saying of some of the narrow minded partisans that the Imaam was of the people of Al-Ra'y[300] is one of the most grotesque and worthless statements.

Those who attack the Imaam and insults him are but the sorry losers. Had those ill-mannered individuals had slightest idea about the tremendous intellectual capacity of the independent jurists[301] and their steadfastness in painstakingly detailed delicate analysis of the sacred tests in driving the rules, they would have recognized the elevated status of Abu Hanifa among the other independent jurists for his unparalleled skill of diving into the depths of the ocean of sacred texts and extracting multitude of pearls.

Know O my fellow Muslim, I dwelled on the virtues and stature of Abu Hanifa more than other Imaams for no other reason than out of mercy for some of the heedless students of other schools who might find some rulings of the Imaam to be weak as they are unable to fathom or comprehend the method of the Imaam in deriving the ruling. This is in contrast to seasoned scholars who are well capable of following the steps taken by the Imaam and understand as to how he arrived at certain conclusions."

Transgression of Albani against Imaam Abu Hanifa

Thus far we have shared with you the opinions of the superlatives of Islamic scholarship, in whose hands is the banner of the science of accreditation and criticism of the narrators, regarding the greatest of the Eponyms[302] Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) including their praises of him with respect to his ability to transmit hadith reliably[303] as well as the depth and breadth of his knowledge. The great Hadith Master Abu Al-Hajjaaj Al-Mizzi said in the introduction to his [legendary] book called *Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal*: "Know O reader that all the statements of the scholars of accreditation and criticism[304] and the like are mainly taken from the *Kitaab Al-Jarh wa Al-Taa'deel* of the Hadith Master and the son of Hadith Master Abu Muhammed Abdurrahmaan bin Abu Hatim Al-Razi, from the *Kitaab Al-Kaamil* of the Hadith Master Abu Ahmad Abdullah bin Ady Al-Turjani, from the *Taarikh Baghdaad* of the Hadith Master Abu Bakr Ahmad bin Ali bin Thabit Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdaadi, from the *Taarikh Dimashq* of the Hadith Master Ibn Al-Qaasim Ali bin Al-Hasan bin Hibatullah who is more commonly known as Ibn Asaakir Al-Dimashqi and what is taken from other than these four books is minimal in comparison.

This book [*Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal*] makes mention of the majority of the transmitters of Islamic sciences, narrators of hadith, independent jurists,[305] judges,[306] righteous predecessors and the most renowned scholars of each of the Islamic Sciences who were the ultimate authorities in their fields among their contemporaries. There were only a few examples missed.

299 fiqh
300 opinion
301 mujtahids
302 al-Imaam al-aa'dzam
303 hifdzoho
304 aimmat al-jarhi wa al-taa'deel
305 aimmat al-deen
306 ahl al-fatwa

Whoever wants to know more about the aforementioned categories of people, let him refer to Al-*Tabaqaat Al-Kubra* of Muhammed bin Saad *Katib Al-Waqidi* and *Al-Tarikh* of Abu Bakr Ahmad bin Abi Haythama Muhammed bin Hibbaan Al-Basti and *Taarikh Misr* of Abu Said Abdurrahman bin Ahmad bin Yunus bin Abdualaa'la Al-Sadafi and *Taarikh Naysaboor* of Al-Haakim [the eminent Hadith Master] Abi Abdullah Muhammed bin Abdullah Al-Naysaboori and *Taarikh Asbahaan* of the Hadith Master Abu Nuaym Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Isbahaani. These 10 books are the most important books ever written in this subject[307].

It is known that Ibn Ady has transgressed the limit regarding Abu Hanifa. So did Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdaadi who came up with dirty falsehood that even the water of the seas will not be enough to clean it up.

Those that authored biographies of Abu Hanifa had ready access to the books of accreditation and criticism yet they only mentioned his virtues and trustworthiness. These authors include Al-Sm'aani, Al-Nawawi, Al-Mizzi, Al-Dhahabi, Ibn Katheer, Al-Husayni, Al-Burhaan Al-Halabi and Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani. All of these authors are considered authorities in the science of accreditation and criticism yet they did not pay attention to or take in to account the unjust criticism regarding the Imaam [Abu Hanifa]. Despite all the smear campaign and character assassination, they included him among the Hadith Masters[308]. They characterize him as trustworthy[309] and consider him as an authority in the science of accreditation and criticism[310] and refer to his views regarding authentication, accreditation and criticism. They mention his point of view along with those of the other Hadith Masters.

Take for example the Imaam Abu Al-Hajjaj Al-Mizzi. All of what he mentions in his book *Tadheeb Al-Kamaal* regarding the Imaam is coming from *Tarikh Baghdaad* of Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdaadi yet he doesn't take any of the defamations knowing that they stemmed from the author's blameworthy partisanship and that the Imaam is far above those slanderous defamations and hence there is no need to mention them.

Imaam Al-Dhahabi declared that the book of *Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal* is the source of knowing the trustworthy[311] narrators[312]. He praised the author saying: "How appropriate the approach of our teacher Abu Al-Hajjaj in excluding all the defamation about Abu Hanifa from his biography that would lead one to conclude that he is a weak narrator".

In this manner, we find the approach of Al-Dhahabi, Ibn Katheer, Al-Husayni, Al-Burhaan Al-Halabi, Ibn Hajar. All of these are the eminent Shafii scholars (may Allah have mercy on them). This approach continued until our day except that a certain self-proclaimed so called Hadith scholar of our day by the name of Al-Shaykh Naasir Al-Albani has strayed from this path and started attacking Abu Hanifa by criticizing his ability to transmit hadith reliably[313], his expertise[314] and declared him as weak narrator for supposedly having had a bad memory and unable to retain and relate a hadith.

He feigned not to see the testimonies of his trustworthiness by the eminent Hadith Masters such as Shaykh Al-Islaam Abi Bistaam Shoba bin Al-Hajjaaj Al-Azdi and the master of the Hadith Masters Abu Said Yahya bin Said Al-Qattaan and the great Imaam and Hadith Master, the role model of the people of accreditation and criticism[315] Abu Al-Hasan Ali bin Al-Madani and the Imaam and unparalleled Hadith Master and the King of the accreditation and criticism Yahya bin Maeen and eminent trustworthy Hadith Master Imaam Abu Dawood Sulaiman bin Al-Ashas Al-Sijistaani and others among the superlatives of this science. Albani says in his *Silsilat Al-Ahadith Al-Daifa*[316] regarding the hadith "When the star appears the clamities are removed from the inhabitants of every locality" that it is weak[317]. Narrated by Al-Imaam Muhammed bin Al-Hasaan [Al-Shaybani] in his book of *Al-Aathaar* (page 159) saying: "Abu Hanifa informed us saying Ata bin Abi Rabaah narrated to us on the authority of Abu Haraira as a raised[318] hadith. Al-Thaqafi narrates the hadith through Abu Hanifa in his *Al-Fawaaid* (1/12/3) also Al-Tabari in his *Al-Mujam Al-Sageer* (page 20), and in *Al-Awsat* (2/140/1) and from him narrates Abu Nuaym in his *Akhbaar Asbahaan* (1/121) and said "What is meant by *star* in the above hadith is firmament". This is a chain whose transmitters are all trustworthy[319] except Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him). Even though he is an

307 Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal volume 1 page 3. Published by Daar Al-Uloom Li-Alturath, first edition (1402)
308 hoffaadz
309 thiqa
310 al-jarh wa al-taa'deel
311 thiqaat
312 From "Al-Mawqidza fi ilm mustalah Al-Hadith" of Immam Al-Dhahabi (page 79) edited by the great scholar Abu Ghudda published by Makatabat Al-matboaat Al-Islamiyya in Haleb. First edition (1405)
313 hifdzihi
314 itqanihi
315 ashaab al-jarhi wa al-ta'deel
316 Volume 1, part 4 pages 77-78 from the publications of Al-Maktaab Al-Islaami
317 daeef
318 marfu'
319 thiqaat

eminent jurist[320], due to his weak memory, Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Al-Nasaai, Ibn Adi and others among the Hadith Masters classified him as weak narrator. For this reason, the Hadith Master Ibn Hajar doesn't go beyond saying that he [Abu Hanifa] was "a famous juris[321]"in his biography in his book *Al-Taqreeb*

We ask Albani if it is indeed true that Ibn Hajar considered Abu Hanifa to be a weak narrator, why did he not state that explicitly instead of just saying "a famous jurist". Furthermore, Ibn Hajar states in the introduction to his book *Al-Taqreeb* under Abu Hanifa's biography: "I judge in this book every individual using the most authentic information and most balanced description available [to me] and my judgement shall be most concise, abridged and clear."

Has Albani read in the books dealing with the terminology of Hadith that the statement "a famous jurist" indicates the weakness of a narrator explicitly or implicitly? If so, would he[322] please indicate to us where to find such a statement? We hope he would be rewarded for his effort [of providing this information]. Furthermore, if a narrator is described as famous[323] or a scholar of jurisprudence[324] would it be an indication of his weakness or would it remove the narrator's unknown status[325] and establishes him as famous? Furthermore, a description such as Ibn Hajar's "famous jurist" about Abu Hanifa is in fact a praise indicating his eminence and knowledge. From whatever perspective you look at it, this statement [of Ibn Hajar] is a positive one. It has been narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said "Whoever Allah(SW) wants to bless, he would enable him understand the religion [or become a jurist]". After all this, is there any better title than being a jurist? In the usage of the righteous predecessors, the word jurist is used only for the independent jurists[326]. What is wrong with Albani that he takes a praise and turns it into an insults? He completely twisted the truth. Allah (SW) will ask him about this [if He so wills].

As for Albani's statement that the Hadith Master Ibn Hajar doesn't go beyond saying "[Abu Hanifa was] a famous jurist" in his "*Al-Taqreeb*" is an outright lie. To claim that Ibn Hajar only says "a famous jurist" is not true at all. Ibn Hajar acknowledged his position as independent jurist[327] in two places. In his *Al-Taqreeb* under nicknames he says: "Abu Hanifa Al-Nooman bin Thabit, the famous in dependent jurist[328]. Under the letter "N", he says "Al-Nooman bin Thabit Al-Koofi Abu Hanifa, the independent jurist[329]. It is said that he is of Persian origin or from the decedents of the tribe of Banu Taym. He is a famous independent jurist of the 6th level. He died in the year 150 and he was 70 years old according to the most authentic narration.

If the term independent jurist is used with no other qualification in the books of accreditation and criticism, it is the highest level of trustworthiness that a narrator can get. This title is higher than reliable[330] or expert[331] or confirmed or established[332] or trustworthy[333]. This is the truth of the matter, however when the likes of Albani starts badmouthing the scholars of the highest eminence they enter in an abominable state and lose their faculty of reason whose similitude is like the blind walking [alone] at night.

From the aforementioned discussion, it should be clear that the Hadith Master Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) did not accept the opinions of those who classified Abu Hanifa as weak. His testimony on Abu Hanifa as being the jurist[334] and the independent jurist[335] is an indication that he prefers Abu Hanifa's narrations over majority of the narrators since the former is a jurist and an Imaam[336]. Albani was unable to comprehend this simple fact or possibly he understood but feigned not to. Thus he twisted the truth completely and claimed that a description such as "famous jurist" is an evidence of a narrator's weakness. Glory be to the One who distributed the intelligence among his servants [whereby depriving some giving in abundance to others].

The great Scholar Hadith Master Yusuf bin Al-Hajjaj Al-Mizzi (may Allah have mercy on his soul) says in the introduction to his *Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal* (volue 1 page 5): "Abu Bakr bin Khuzayma said: "On the authority of Abdullah bin Hashim Al-Toosi who said we were with Waki' who said which of the following chains [of transmission] is dearer to you?

320 faqeeh
321 faqeehun mashhoor
322 By now he has passed away and the responsibility befalls on the shoulders of his followers. [Tr]
323 mashhoor
324 faqeeh
325 al-jahaala
326 mujtahid mutlaq
327 imaamatihi
328 al-imaam al-mashhoor
329 al-imaam
330 thiqa
331 mutqin
332 thabt
333 adl
334 al-faqeeh
335 al-Imaam
336 independent jurist

Al-Aa'mash from Abi Wail from Abdullah or

Sufyan from Mansoor from Ibraheem from Alqama?

We said Al-Aa'mash from Abi Wail from Abdullah is [dearer to us and it is] shorter. He said Al-Aa'mash is a scholar and so is Abu Wail whereas the second chain is a narration of a jurist from a jurist all the way to the end. Someone else added saying that a hadith transmitted by [trustworthy] jurists[337] is more beloved to us than the one transmitted by scholars[338]."

Thus, it is known that the Hadith Master Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalaani has not narrated any opinion from the experts in all his other works that would imply that Abu Hanifa is a weak narrator no matter how much Albani whishes otherwise. On the contrary, he [Ibn Hajar] narrates the testimony of Yahya bin Maeen, who is without doubt the ultimate authority in this field, in his book *Tahdheeb Al-Tahdheeb*. Here is what he says: "Muhammed bin Said Al-Awfi said: I heard Yahya bin Maeen say: Abu Hanifa is a trustworthy narrator[339]. He never relates a hadith except what he had committed completely to memory. He does not narrate a hadith that he had not fully memorized." Said bin Muhammed Al-Asadi said: On the authority of Yahya bin Maeen who said: "Abu Hanifa is a trustworthy narrator in hadith". He also said: "Ibn Abi Dawood narrated on the authority of Nasr bin Ali who said: "I heard Dawood Al-Khuraybi say: "People [who oppose Abu Hanifa] are of two categories, namely envious and ignoramus.

Ahmad bin Abda the judge of Al-Ray narrated on the authority of his father who said: "We were with Ibn Aisha. He mentioned a hadith narrated by Abu Hanifa and said: If you saw him you would have wanted [to be with] him. Your similitude vis-à-vis Abu Hanifa is as it is said:

Woe to you! Get off their backs, Instead strive to achieve
like they did rather than badmouthing them behind their backs

He sealed the Imaam's biography by saying "The virtues of Abu Hanifa are plenty. May Allah be pleased with him and make him reside in the gardens of bliss. Ameen"

The exemplary scholar and Hadith Master Al-Khuraybi Abu Abdurrahmaan Al-Shaabi Al-Koofi was residing in Al-Khuraybi quarter of Basra as was narrated by Al-Dhahabi in his *Tadhkirat Al-Hoffadz*. The Hadith Master Ibn Hajar said in *Al-Taqreeb* under the biography of Al-Khuraybi : "Abdullah bin Dawood bin Amir Al-Mahdani, Abu Abdurrahmaan Al-Khuraybi, originally from Kufa, is a trustworthy narrator of the 9th level and a devoted worshipper. He died in in the year 213 at the age of 87. He stopped narrated [shortly] before his death and that is why Bukhari did not hear from him.

He says in "*Tahdheeb Al-Thadheeb*": "Ibn Saad said he was a trustworthy narrator[340] and a devout worshipper. Muawiya bin Saleh said on the authority of Ibn Maeen who said: "Al-Khuraybi is a trustworthy, truthful and reliable narrator." Othman Al-Darimi said I asked Ibn Maeen about Al-Khuraybi and Abi Asim. He said those two are trustworthy narrators. Al-Darimi said: "Al-Khuraybi has a shorter chain" Abu Zur'a and Al-Nassai said: "He is a trustworthy narrator." Abu Hanifa said: "He would incline to the Kufan School of jurisprudence and was a truthful narrator[341]. Al-Daraqotni said: "He is a trustworthy narrator and a devout servant of Allah." Ibn Uyayana said: "He is an unparalleled scholar. In another place he said "He is our senor teacher".

Listen O partisan Albani! Open your eyes and see what the unparalleled scholar Al-Khuraybi, the teacher of Ibn Uyayana, trustworthy and truthful narrator, hermit and devout worshipper[342] and reliable[343] [individual] has to say about Abu Hanifa: "The opponents of Abu Hanifa are either envious or ignoramus." Do not be lured [O Albani] by what his envious or ignoramus enemies have to say.

As for Ibn Aiesha, he is Abu Abdurrahmaan Ubaydullah bin Muhammed bin Hafs Al-Aiesha. He was mentioned by Ibn Hajar in *Al-Taqreeb*. He said: "(R,T,S) Ubaydillah bin Muhammed bin Aiesha. His grandfather was called Hafs bin Omar bin Musa bin Ubaydillah bin Ma'mar Al-Taymi. He was referred to as Ibn Aisha or Al-Aishy or Al-Ayshiyya pertaining to Aisha the daughter of Talha and he is a descendent of her. He was a trustworthy narrator[344] and he was generous. He was accused of being part of Al-Qadariyya sect but it is not true. He was one of the greatest scholars of 10th level. He died in the year 228.

He said in "*Tadheeb Al-Thadheeb*": "Abu Taalib said on the authority of Ahmad: He is truthful [as a narrator].

337 fuqahaa
338 shoyookh
339 thiqa
340 thiqa
341 sadooq
342 zaahid, aabid, naasik
343 ma'moon
344 thiqa

Abu Hatim said: He is a truthful and trustworthy narrator and Ahmad narrated from him. He had a thousand hadith of Hammad bin Salama. He was meticulous, eloquent, well-mannered and generous. Al-Ajuri said on the authority of Abu Dawood: He gathered much knowledge [from scholars]. Al-Sazij said: He was the most learned of the people of Basra without a doubt. He was noble and generous. Ibraheem Al-Harbi said: "I have never seen anyone like him". Ibn Hibban said: "He was a very knowledgeable with regards to family roots and ancestry of Arabs." Al-Imaam Al-Dhahabi describes him with the following praise-filled statement in his *Siyar Al-A'laam Al-Nubalaa*: "The magnificent scholar, trustworthy hadith narrator … and truthful."

Here is the teacher of Imaam Ahmad, the eminent scholar Al-Akhbari, the Hadith Master, the truthful and trustworthy narrator and transmitter of many [Islamic Sciences] and was among the foremost scholars of Al-Basra. He mentions a hadith narrated by Abu Hanifa and some of those that were present said we don't want him [as Albani says in our day] and he said to them: "If you saw him you would want him. The similitude of you vis-à-vis him is as the poet[345] puts it:

> Woe to you! Get off their backs, instead strive to achieve
> like they did rather than badmouthing them behind their backs

There is a lesson to be learned in this for Albani if he were from the people of understanding and integrity[346].

When Abu Hanifa is a trustworthy narrator[347], he narrates only that which he had fully memorized, he never narrates that which he did not commit to memory as was expressed by Ibn Maeen and narrated and supported by Ibn Hajar without any objections. How can one then conclude that Ibn Hajar was affected by those who made unfavorable remarks about Abu Hanifa? What is wrong with Albani that he doesn't understand this simple fact? What prevented him from seeing, recognizing and understanding this clear-cut fact is [no other than] his fury and stubborn partisanship against Abu Hanifa.

In the book *Al-Jawahir wa Al-Dorar fi tarjamat Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Hajar* written by the Hadith Master Al-Imaam Shamsuddeen Muhammed bin Abdurrahmaan Al-Sakhawi, it says: "He [Hadith Master ibn Hajar] was asked about what was mentioned by Al-Nassai in his *Al-Duafaa wa Al-Matrokeen* regarding Abu Hanifa (may Allah be pleased with him) that he was not strong in hadith and that he made many blunders and mistakes despite his very few narrations. Is this true? Has any of the Imaams of the Hadith Science agree with this statement of Al-Nasaai? He [Ibn Hajar] answered and said: "Al-Nasaai is from among the foremost scholars of hadith. What he mentions is his conclusions based on the information that he had. We cannot accept everything that everyone says[348] [including Al-Nasaai]. A group of Hadith Scholars agreed with Al-Nasaai. Al-Khateeb collected their statements in his *Al-Tarikh*. In these narrations, some are to be rejected while others are to be accepted. It has been explained, on behalf of the Imaam [Abu Hanifa] that the reason his narrations are not many is because he only narrated those that he fully memorized. While this strict rule of his forced him to narrate limited number of hadith, yet he narrated quite a few hadith. In summary, it is better not to dig deep in these kinds of matters. People like Imaam Abu Hanifa attained a lofty status in this nation such that unfavorable statements against them are to be dismissed. Rather, Allah

345 Ibn Hajar mentions this story in his Tahdheeb Al-Tahdheeb briefly. The full version is found in Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal (29/442) in the print published by Muassasaat Al-Risaala in Beirut.

346 amanah

347 thiqa

348 It appears that Al-Nassai changed his opinion regarding Abu Hanifa. At first he considered him as a weak narrator but later on he modified his view. He narrates from Abu Hanifa in his Al-Sunana Al-Kubra (4/322-323) in the section "Al-Tadheraat Wa Al-Shohood" under the subsection called "One who had intercourse with an animal". It is the hadith of Abu Hanifa from Asim, from Abu Razee from Abdullah bin Abbaas who said: "There is no capital punishment for the one who has intercourse with an animal". Then Al-Nasai says this is not an authentic narration for Asim bin Omar is a weak narrator. He declares the narration weak due to the teacher of Abu Hanifa (Asim bin Omar). If Abu Hanifa was weak as in Al-Doafaa wa Al-Matrookeen, he would have declared the hadith weak due to Abu Hanifa. He did not do so. He stopped at the teacher of Abu Hanifa. Evidently, he changed his view from what was in his book Al-Doafaa and started to consider him not weak.

We see many times great Hadith Critics change their views once new information becomes available which necessitates different conclusion than the one they previously reached.

Furthermore, Al-Nasaai thought that the narrator Asim, from whom Abu Hanifa narrated, is Asim bin Omar Al-Madani who is a weak narrator. The reality is that Asim in this narration is Asim bin Bahdala Abu Al-Najood as it is spelled out in Kitaab Al-Aathaar of Abu Hanifa that was narrated by Imaam Muhammed bin Al-Hasan Al-Shaybaani on page 311 (Baab Dar' Al-Hodood). This was confirmed by the Hadith Master Ibn Hajar in his Tadheeb Al-Tahdheeb (10/415). In the published version of Al-Tadheeb [as opposed to the handwritten copy], the name Abi Dhar is found in place of Abi Al-Najood. Let it be corrected. Al-Mizzi doesn't mention in Tadheeb Al-Kamaal Asim bin Omar among the teachers of Abu Hanifa. Rather, he mentions Asim bin Bahdala Al-Najood among the teachers of Abu Hanifa. He put the letter "S" right next to the name of Al-Najood indicating that Al-Nasaai reported his hadith by way of Abu Hanifa. There is no other hadith in the works of Al-Nasaai for Abu Hanifa. This is a clear indication that Al-Mizzi doesn't agree with Al-Nasaai regarding Asim's full name being Asim bin Omar, instead he is of the opinion that his name is Asim bin Bahdala.

Asim bin Bahdala is the famous reciter. His hadith is found in six books (*Al-kutob Al-sitta*). Al-Nasai said he is fair. A group [of scholars] declared him as trustworthy narrator (*thiqa*). Even if some expressed doubts about his ability to memorize hadith reliably, yet this hadith is fair (*jayyid*) if God the Exalted so wills.

(SW) lifted them up to such an elevated status. They are the leaders of the schools that have active following to this day and this is the best testimony in their favor. Allah is the Possessor and Bestower of success[349].

Albani must fear Allah in what he says; avoiding fraud and attributing to Ibn Hajar –and others- what they did not say. Allah is the sole Possessor and Bestower of success.

The most prominent of the students of Ibn Hajar, the Hadith Master Al-Sakhawi urged and encouraged in his *Al-I'laan bi Al-Tawbikh Liman Dhamma Al-Tarikh*[350]" people to not pay attention at all to the [unjust] critics of Abu Hanifa [or other Eponyms] when he said: "Included in this (i.e., stay away from digging into and spreading) what happened between the independent jurists (Imaams), especially those that have different views during debates or research. As for what the Hadith Master Abu Al-Shaykh Ibn Hayyaan attributes in his *Kitaab Al-Sunnah* to some of the independent jurists[351] as well as the Hadith Master Ahmed bin Adi in his *Al-Kaamil*, the Hadith Master Abu Bakr Al-Khateeb in his *Tarikh Baghdaad* and others before them such as Ibn Sayha in his *Musannaf*, Al-Bukhari, Al-Nasaai, who are Mujtahids and they mean well yet I am shy of repeating here what they said [about some of the independent jurists]. One should not take their words in cases like these. Because one of our most learned judges in our time rebuked an individual who is said to have used the material from the aforementioned books [regarding some of the [Imaams]. In addition our teacher Ibn Hajar, when he realized that we were listening in the book of *Kitaab zhamm Al-kalaam* of Al-Harawi being read to him, he forbade us narrating from this book because of the similar statements found therein."

Response of Ibn Abdulbarr to the Critics of Abu Hanifa and in it are lessons for Albani[352] if he takes heed

As for the Imaam, Shaykh Al-Islam, the Hadith Master of North Africa, Abu Omar Yusuf bin Abdulbarrahman Al-Namari Al-Qurtobi (may Allah have mercy on him) has declared the truth with all its glory by taking down the masks of the critics of Abu Hanifa in his *Al-Iqnaa fi fadaail Al-thalatha Al-Aimma Al-fuqahaa* and in *Jami' bayan Al-ilm wa fadlihi wa ma yanbaghi fi riwayatihi wa naqlihi*. He says in the biography of Abu Yusuf found in *Al-Iqnaa*: "Yahya bin Maeen used to praise him and recognize him as a trustworthy[353] narrator, however the rest of the Hadith scholars [of the time] were like the enemies to Abu Hanifa and his students"

We ask you O Albani: Is the criticism of a narrator by his enemy without a clear-cut proof acceptable [according to the principles of science of Hadith]? Especially if they are based on just (did u mean unjust?)claims regarding an Imaam about whose eminence, knowledge and piety there is unanimous consensus in the Islamic nation? Furthermore, is the criticism that is based on claims, acceptable about an Imaam who is followed by half of the Muslim world throughout the centuries until our day? Don't you have any intelligence that would prevent you from entering into such a labyrinth of contradictions?

Al-Imaam ibn Abdulbarr says in his *Jami' bayan Al-Ilm*[354]: "The people of Hadith Science went too far in Abu Hanifa's criticism and they transgressed the limits. What lead them to this, as they acknowledged, was that Abu Hanifa utilized deductive reasoning[355] as well as legal analogy[356] along with the hadith and considered all three of them side by side. Majority of the experts say, if there is an authentic narration[357], there is no room for legal analogy and deductive reasoning[358].

When he did not act upon a unitary narration[359], many a times because of a possible interpretation. He was not alone in doing so. Many have done it before him. There were people that did the same after him that belonged to the school of Al-Ra'y. Majority of the time he was following the local scholars that came before him such as Ibrahim Al-Nakhai and the student of Ibn Maood except that the Imaam and his students went further in this regard in that they responded to the various issues through deductive reasoning[360] and preference[361]. Thus there

349 Our friend great scholar and researcher Muhammed Awwama narrated this story in ***his Athar Al-hadith Al-shareef fi ikhtilaaf Al-aimmah*** [Role of Hadith in the differences between the Mujtahid Imaams] (may Allah have mercy on them) page 166-117, 2nd print published by Dar Al-salam li altibaa wa Al-nashr in 1407

350 Page 65, published by Al-Qudsi in Damascus year 1349

351 al-aimma al-muqalladeen

352 At the time of the writing of this book Albani was alive however by the time it was translated in to English he had since long passed away. This statement now applies to his followers. [Tr.]

353 thiqa

354 2/148-150 published by Al-Munira in Egypy

355 al-ra'y

356 qiyaas

357 idha sahha al-hadithu

358 nadzar

359 hadith ahaad

360 al-ra'y

361 al-istihsaan

were many differences between him and the other righteous predecessors. This [approach of his] was branded by his opponents as innovation[362].

I cannot think of anyone among the scholars of Islam except that in one way or another he did not interpret a verse in a way [different from the rest] or he did not have an opinion that is unique to him regarding a Prophetic tradition and because of this unique view he preferred to act upon another hadith due to a possible interpretation or claiming that it is abrogated except that such examples are many in the case of Abu Hanifa whereas for others these cases are few in numbers.

Yahya bin Saleem said: "I heard Abdullah bin Ghassim in the circle of Ibraheem bin Aghlab who was narrating from Al-Layth bin Saad who said: "I counted 70 issues where Malik released a verdict based on deductive reasoning[363] all of which were going against the Prophetic tradition and I wrote to him [pointing out to him all these cases]."

Abu Omar bin Abdulbarr said: "There is not one among the scholars of the nation that will refuse to act upon a hadith whose authenticity has been established in his view except for a claim that it is abrogated by a similar narration, or consensus [of scholars], or an established practice that must be followed or a defect in the chain of the hadith. Anyone that does this [refuse to act upon a hadith without anyone of the above conditions], loses his status as a qualified truthful narrator[364] of Islamic sciences let alone being recognized as an independent jurist [and a leader of an active school of thought] instead of being labelled as perverted transgressor[365].

They bear a grudge against Abu Hanifa for [supposedly] having some of the beliefs of Al-Murjia. However there are many among the scholars that were accused of having some of the beliefs of Al-Murjia. These accusations about other scholars did not draw as much attention as it did about Abu Hanifa because the latter was an independent jurist and a leader of a school of thought. In addition, people were envious of him; they attributed things to him that he was innocent of and they fabricated stories what does not befit him.

A group of scholars have praised him or preferred him [over others] and if I find the time and energy, God willing, I will write a book where I will gather his virtues, virtues of Imaam Malik, Al-Shafii, Al-Thawri and Al-Awzai. We made a promise some time ago in [our work regarding] the news of the scholars of hadith God willing[366].

Abbas bin Muhammed Al-Boory[367] narrated saying I heard Yahaya bin Maeen say "Our friends have gone too far regarding Abu Hanifa and his students and followers. He [Yahya bin Maeen] was asked: Did Abu Hanifa used to lie? He replied: He was too noble to lie.

The Hadith Master Muhammed bin Al-Husain Al-Adi Al-Mawsili mentions among the narrations that are at the end of his book *Al-Duafaa* that Yahya bin Maeen said: "I did not see anyone more preferable [as a scholar] than Wakee who used to issue verdicts according to Abu Hanifa and he used to memorize all the hadith [narrated] by Abu Hanifa. He took many hadith from Abu Hanifa.

Ali bin Al-Madani said: "Among those that narrated from Abu Hanifa are: Al-Thawri, Ibn Al-Mubarak, Hammad bin Zaid, Husaym, Wakee bin Al-Jarrah, Ubaad bin Al-Awwaam, Ja'far bin Awn. He [Abu Hanifa] is a trustworthy narrator[368], having no issues[369].

Yahya bin Said said: "We may value an opinion of Abu Hanifa and start acting upon it." Yahya said: "I listened from Abu Yusf [the book called] *Al-Jaami' Al-Sagheer* [all of it]". Al-Azdi mentioned him and said: "Muhammed bin Harb narrated to us saying I heard Ali bin Al-Madani [say] and related the [aforementioned] narration verbatim.

Abu Amr bin Abdulbar said: "Those who narrated [hadith] from Abu Hanifa and praised him are more than those that found a fault in him. The latter had to do with his submersion in deductive reasoning[370], legal analogy[371] and having [supposedly] some of the beliefs of the Al-Murjia sect.

It has been said that the differences of opinion that exist about a man of the past is an evidence of his acumen. They say: Don't you see that two people went astray regarding their view of Ali bin Abi Taalib. A group went too far in his love and another transgressed the limits in his hate. It has been narrated in a hadith that two groups will prepare their destruction due to their view on Ali bin Abi Taalib, one will go too far in his love and another will fabricate slanderous lies due to their hate of him. This is a characteristic of a people of acumen who had attained

362 bid'ah

363 bi ra'yihi

364 adalatihi

365 faasiq

366 He had written later a book called "Al-Intiqa fi Fadail Al-Thalatha Al-Fuqaha, Maalik, Al-Shafii wa Abu Hanifa"

367 Abdurrahmaan bin Yahya reported to us saying Ahmad bin Said narrated to us saying Abu Said bin Al-Arabi related to us saying Abbas bin Muhammed Al-Boory narrated saying…

368 thiqa

369 la ba'sa bihi

370 al-ra'y

371 qiyaas

a very high status as men of God. Allah knows best."

Ibn Abdulbar said in the chapter: " What is the ruling regarding regarding the accreditation and criticism of scholars on each other[372]" of his book *Jami' bayaan Al-Ilm*[373]: "This is an area that many people have made grave mistakes. A group of ignoramus that does not know their rights nor their responsibilities have gone astray. The right approach in this regard is that whoever is recognized as a reliable, trustworthy narrator through authentic accreditation, and whose trustworthiness regarding the knowledge that he transmits is established and whose trustworthiness in narration and whose pre-occupation with religions sciences is known, one should not pay any attention to those who say otherwise unless and until they comes up with unequivocal, undeniable evidence through reliable and truthful sources by way of testimonials. Once these testimonials are examined [and approved], one must act upon them.

As for the one whose eminence in scholarship is not established and his narrations are not authenticated due to his inability to memorize the narrations reliably and due to lack of his mastery of the subject matter, in this case, one has to look at what the experts have agreed upon regarding him as narrator and the researcher would do his utmost to digest all that is said about him and reach a conclusion supported by the evidence.

The evidence that the criticism of a critic regarding an Imaam, who is followed by great number of people such as 4 Eponyms, is not accepted is as follows: Among the righteous predecessors, there were people who used some harsh words against each other in a state of anger, or due to envy as was stated by Ibn Abbaas, Maalik bin Dinaar and Abu Hazim[374].

Some of them draw their words against each other due to differences in interpretation and independent judgement. They are not to be imitated in the situations without clear evidence or proof that necessitates their imitation. In this section we present some of the statements of great scholars about each other that we should not pay attention to or dwell in. These examples should make it clear that what we have just said in fact had happened and that it is not hypothetical. Allah is the sole Possessor and Bestower of success

Then Ibn Abdulbarr quotes many examples of statements of scholars about each other that should be completely ignored. Then he says "among the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as the scholar of highest eminence there were more such exchanges when they were angry. However, the scholars in general did not pay attention to these exchanges that happened in a state of anger since they were also human beings that were at times pleasant and at times angry. The statement made in a state of anger is different than the one made in a state of contentment. How beautiful is the saying of a poet when he says

"the true meekness shows up only in the state of anger"

We have seen transgression and envy even in the early history of Islam. We only need to recall a resident of Kufa and what he said about Saad bin Abi Waqqas. He said: "He [Saad] doesn't deal justly with his subjects, he doesn't take part in fighting expeditions, nor does he divide [the booty] equally." All of these accusations are about a companion who participated in the battle of Badr and is one of the ten people who are given the glad tidings of paradise. He is one of the people that made up the advisory board of Omar bin Al-Khattab (ra) who said: "The messenger of Allah (pbuh) departed this world while being pleased with Saad."

It has been narrated that Musa (phuh) said "O my Lord, please stop the verbal abuse of the children of Israel." Allah said "I did not do it for myself, how would I do it for you?"

Abu Omar said: "By Allah, people have transgressed the limits in backbiting and false accusations. They are not satisfied with general backbiting or false accusations, rather they go after individuals. They don't stop at the criticism of the ignoramus, they go after the scholars. All of this is due to ignorance and envy. Ibn Al-Mubarak was told that such and such individual is backbiting Abu Hanifa. He recited this poem:

They envied you when they saw that Allah bestowed

372 Baab Hokm Qawl Al-Ulamam ba'duhom fi ba'd

373 Vol 2/152-163

374 Ibn Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) said: "Take from the knowledge of the scholars but do not take what they say about each other. I swear by the one in whose hands my life is, they are more envious than the billy goats in their barn."

Maalik bin Deenar said: "One should listen to the scholars in everything except what they say about each other for they are more envious of each other than the billy goats."

Abu Hazim said: "There was a time when a scholar met someone more knowledgeable than him they used to consider it as a golden opportunity, when he met someone like him he would talk to him. When he met someone less knowledgeable than him, he did not boast. In our day, however, when one sees someone more knowledgeable than him he finds fault in him in order to show people that he is not worthy of their attention nor would he talk to the one at his level and he would boast at those who are less than him." All of this was narrated with a chain of transmission by Ibn Abdullbarr (may Allah have mercy on him) In the beginning of the chapter on rulings regarding the statements of scholars on each other.

Upon you what he bestowed upon the very best

Abu Asm Al-Nabil was told such and such individual is talking about Abu Hanifa in an inappropriate manner. He is doing like Nusaib said in a poem

They envied this young man when they could not compete with him

They became like enemies and adversaries to him

Whoever wants to take the words of trustworthy scholars regarding one another let him take first the judgement of the companions that we have just mentioned about each other. Whosoever does this will be on a clear path of misguidance and will be of the evident losers. Such is his case if he accepts what Ikrima said about Saad bin Al-Musayyab, Al-Shabi, Al-Nakhai, scholars of Hijaz, scholars of Mecca, scholars of Kufa, scholars of greater Syria, or even Malik and Al-Shafii that we mention some of what they said about each other.

If he doesn't accept (for example what some of the companions said about each other), and he will not accept for sure if Allah (SW) guided him, he should not accept in the same way about someone whose trustworthiness is accepted whose knowledge is very esteemed whose endeavors in the advancement in Islamic science is known who is free from major sins he who possesses good morals and avoids shameful practices his benefit is more than his harm for such persons no criticism is accepted that isn't fully supported by evidence. This is the truth regarding this matter if God so wills. Abu Al- Itahiyya said

Those that praised Saad bin Al-Mosayyib and some of the aforementioned scholars are more than we can count. People recorded their virtues and stories and wrote as a result of such work their biographies. Whoever reads the virtues of Malik, Al-Shafii, Abu Hanifa after they have read the virtues of the companions and the followers spend some time to digest their biographies this would be a praiseworthy effort and a very beneficial one for him. May Allah reward us for our love for them. Al- Thawri said "when the righteous servants of Allah[375] (SW) are mentioned, Allah's mercy descends. Whoever neglects everything about them except what they said about each other due to envy in a state of anger, or their small mistakes without paying attention to their virtues will be deprived of success and will be involved in backbiting and will go astray. May Allah make us and you among those who listen and follow the best of what they hear [or read].

We started this section with the statement of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) that the two diseases of envy and rancor of the nations before you is inflicting this nation. This should be enough for now. Whosoever Allah bestows success upon, even a little wisdom will be enough for him as well as a little evidence if he understands and puts in practice what he knows. My success is only from Allah. He is enough for me. What a wonderful helper he is.

Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak bin Yusuf reported to us saying Ibn Rahmoun narrated to us saying " I heard Muhammed bin Bakr bin Dara say I heard Abu Dawoud Sulayman bin Al-Ashath say: May Allah have mercy on Maalik. He is an imam. May Allah have mercy on Al-Shafii. He is an imam. May Allah have mercy on Abu Hanifa. He was an imam[376] Ibn Abdulbarr said in his *Jaami Bayal Al-Ilm* also Ahmad bin Abi Raja[377] told said I heard my father say I saw Muhammed bin Al-Hassan [Al-Shaybani] in a dream and said to him "how are you doing" he said I was forgiven and I was told "you were given all this knowledge because we wanted to forgive you" then I asked him "what happened to Abu Yusuf?" he said "he is a level above me" I said "what about Abu Hanifa?" he said "he is at the highest of the levels"

Response of the Hadith Master Ibn Al-Turkmani to those that declared Abu Hanifa as a weak narrator

The supreme judge of his time the great scholar the eminent Hadith Master Al-Shaykh Alauddeen Ali bin Uthman bin Al-Mardeeni known as Ibn Al-Turkmani says in his *Al-Jawhar Al-Naqi Fe Al-Radi Ala Al-Bayhaqi*[378] regarding the narration of Ibn Abbas (ra) where he says: "Do not kill the apostate woman." Even though some expressed unfavorable opinions about Abu Hanifa [regarding hadith narration], many have declared him as authentic trustworthy[379] narrator. Ibn Hibban narrates Abu Hanifa's Hadith in his Sahih[380] and Al-Hakim used his narration

375 al-saaliheen

376 Volume 1/47 and 1/213 from the newly edited print

377 Khalaf bin Al Qaasim narrated to us saying Abu Abdullah bin Muhammed Al-Warraq informed us saying Ahmad bin Masoud related to us saying Muhammed bin Al Mississi reported to us saying Ahmad bin Al Qaasim narrated to us saying Ahmad bin Abi Raja told us saying…

378 Volume 8/203 from the published copy of Bayhaqis Al sunan Al Kubra in the addendum

379 thiqa

380 In addition, he says in this book of Thiqaat volume 8 page 467 in the biography of Ali bin Maabad bin Shaddad Al-Abdi Al-Misri who is a straightforward narrator (mustaqeem al-hadeeth) for Ibn Hibban, Abdullah bin Muhammed bin Samee in Sayda narrated

as a witness[381] in *Al-Mustadrak*. In addition, a person of the caliber of Abu Hanifa in piety, worship, and knowledge cannot be dismissed as a narrator based on what any random person says. A group of righteous predecessors said that Abu Hanifa was envied. Abu Omar - Ibn Abdulbarr – narrates in his *Al-Intiqaa fee fadail Al-Thalatha Al-Fuqahaa* from Hatim bin Dawoud who said I said to Fadl bin Musa Al-Sinani "What do you say about those who attack Abu Hanifa?" He replied and said "Verily Abu Hanifa came up with what they can fathom and what they can't fathom and he did not leave them anything and so they envied him.

The response of Ibn al Wazir Al-Yemeni to those who attempted to instill doubts regarding Abu Hanifa's credentials in Hadith science and Arabic

The eminent scholar, Hadith master, Abu Abdullah Muhammed bin Ibrahim bin Al-Wazeer Al- Yamaani (may Allah have mercy on him), who died in the year 840, says in his *Al rawda Al-baasim fee Al-Sunnati Abi Al-Qaasim*[382] in response to Al-Sayyid Jamaal Al-Deen Ali bin Muhammed bin Abi Al-Qaasim when the latter tried to sew doubts in Abu Hanifa's credentials regarding Hadith science and Arabic. He said:

"This objector must either deny that Abu Hanifa had issued all the legal verdicts [attributed to him] and deny the fact that generations after generations his views and the principles of his school were recorded and transmitted or accept all of this. If he denied, his denial would be absurd as the one who denies the presence of the sun in the daylight. If he accepts that he issued all the fatwas attributed to him and that his school was kept alive and transmitted from generation to generation this indicates that he was an independent jurist[383]. We can conclude from this the following points:

First point: His virtues, trustworthiness, truthfulness, piety have been established with authentic narrations. If he issued verdicts without knowledge or without having gathered in himself prerequisites of a jurist this would be used against him and he would be declared untrustworthy and impious and would be disgraced from the point of intellect and integrity. This is because pretending to be an expert in a field where one is not is a habit of the foolish and the scurrilous, and the one who has no sense of shame or integrity and despicable and contemptable. While the Imam's virtues [and elevated status among the Muslim nation over the centuries] is the best response to those who want to label and taint him with these abused attributes and gruesome disgraces.

Second point: The fact that innumerable eminent scholars have received and transmitted [the verdicts and principles of] his school is a proof that they were convinced of his veracity and expertise in issuing independent verdicts[384]. This is because it is not permissible for them to transmit his school unless and until they are convinced that he was a qualified independent jurist[385]. For pretending that they were transmitting frim an independent jurist while not being sure is forbidden. This is because if he is truly an independent jurist and disagrees with his contemporaries, one cannot speak of consensus[386] which is one of the sources of Islamic law. In addition, his disagreement has implications on the consensus of the scholars after him. Furthermore, it is permissible for people to imitate an Eponym after his death [since the views of the imams of the schools of thought are transmitted with utmost authenticity[387]]

Third point: That we say there is consensus about his status as an independent jurist[388] even if someone disagrees with this, this consensus continues even after his death. We can say this because his verdicts are circulated among the great scholars and spread all around the Muslim world from East to West, in Yemen and in greater Syria from the time of the followers circa 150 to our days, which is the beginning of the tenth century. No one is rebuked for relying on his verdicts or circulating his views. You find the Muslims either follow his school or follow other schools but have no problem with his followers or views. This is the way in which we establish consensus about majority of the matters.

Fourth point: Many of the scholars have stated in their books that one of the ways of knowing that a scholar reached the level of independent jurist is that people refer to his verdicts without any opposition from the distin-

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to me saying Al-Muzani reported to us saying Ali bin Maabad narrated to us on the authority of Abdullah bin Amr who said Al Amash said to Abu Hanifa "O Nooman, what do you say about such and such person [as far as his qualities as a narrator]. He [Abu Hanifa] said. You narrated to us on the authority of such and such person such and such. Al-Amash said O jurists, you are doctors and we, the hadith scholars, are the pharmacists.

381 istashhada behee

382 Volume 1 pages 158 through 166

383 mujtahid

384 ijtihad

385 mujtahid

386 ijmaa

387 tawaatur

388 mujtahid

guished and eminent scholars. The scholars have treated this subject in the books of principles of jurisprudence[389]. They mention that the evidence for one legitimacy as independent jurist is the consensus of the Islamic nation that the general public can imitate[390] him[391] among those who mention this point are the scholars of Al-Zaydiya school and Scholars of Mutazila[392] like Al-Ma'mar Bilali in his [book] *Al-Safwa* and Abu Ali Husain Al-Basri in his [book] *Al-Mutamad*.

What was stated above was the approval of the other scholars regarding a certain jurist issuing a verdict. What about the one who issued verdicts during the blessed generation of the followers[393] and the schools of highest eminence among the followers did not disapprove of this? Such is the case of Abu Hanifa for he was a follower and a contemporary to some of the superlatives of learning among the followers.

The people of Sunna[394] as well as Mutazila[395] are in accord regarding the eminence of Abu Hanifa. As for the people of Sunna, this is more obvious than the sun in the middle of the day and hence needs no further proof. [Blessed be the one who said:]

If a people demand proof that it is daytime
How can one establish with them the veracity of anything?

As for Mutazila, majority of them were honored to depend on Abu Hanifa and follow his school. These include Abu Ali and his father Abu Hashim from the early ones and Abu Al-Husayni Al-Basri and Al-Zamakhshari among the late comers. Even we hold as true their so-called claim that they became independent jurist themselves, yet we must admit that they imitated him [Abu Hanifa] and followed him and followed his school for decades before reaching the level of an independent jurist. Even thereafter they did not disassociate themselves with him as they called themselves Hanafis.

Al-Hakim Abi Said included a section in his book *Safinaat Al-Uloom* where he has mentioned the virtues of Abi Hanifa.

The historians have consensus about his eminence and one of them authored a book called *Shaqaiq Al-nooman fi manaaqib Al-nooman*. Had the Imaam Abu Hanifa been ignorant [of Arabic and Hadith] as some ignoramus claim], and wasn't adorned with the jewels of knowledge, the pinicles of Islamic sciences such as the judge Abu Yusuf, Muhammed bin Al-Hasan Al-Shaybani, Al-Thawri, Abu Al-Hasan Al-Karkhi and others like them would not gathered around him and would not become his followers.

The scholars of Hanafi School in India, Egypy, greater Syria, Arabian Peninsula, Macca, Medina and Iraq starting from the year 150 until our day, more than 600 years, are more than we can list. They were prominent jurists of highest piety and God consciousness.

How then does the objector dare say that the aforementioned distinguished scholars of highest eminence became the followers of an ignorant person who doesn't know that the Arabic proposition (bi) makes the following word in to a genitive[396] nor he knows what he says about the hadith of the Prophet (pbuh)? The statement of this objector is nothing but utterance of an ignorant one like a blind wondering in the dark.

As for the criticism of the Imaam that he was ignorant of Arabic, no doubt this must the words of a deviant prejudiced one. Abu Hanifa was among the experts of the Arabic language and was eloquent.

This is due to the fact that he lived around the time where the Arabic was still pure and was still living the golden age. He was a contemporary to Jareer and Farazdaq. He saw the servant of the Prophet (pbuh) Anas bin Maalik twice. Anas (RA) passed away in the year 93 and it appears that Abu Hanifa saw him in his adolescence. It appears as though Abu Hanifa was among those who lived a long time and passed the age of 90[397] when he died in the year 150.

This necessitates that Abu Hanifa became mature 80 years after the Messanger (pbuh) as the prophet passed

389 usuul al fiqh

390 Taqleed (imitation) in this context means following his verdicts without knowing how the jurist came to that conclusion and which evidence he used Tr.

391 yajuuzu taqleeduhu

392 rationalists

393 tabeen

394 ahl al-sunna wa al-jamaaj: This expression denotes main stream Islam or orthodox Islam.

395 rationalists

396 majroor

397 This is according to those historians who say that he was born in the year 61. The more authentic view is that he was born in the year 80. This doesn't change the evidence of the author Ibn Al-Wazeer whether he was born in 61 or 80.

away in the year 10. This indicates that Abu Hanifa lived during the part of the golden age of the Arabic language. He is the first and the most senior of the Imaams. While Imaam Malik, as senior as he was, died 30 years after Abu Hanifa.

No doubt that at the time of Abu Hanifa, the alterations in the Arabic language were very few. Because of that, none of the eminent scholars undergone an independent study of the Arabic language for the spoken language was still pure and correct at that time as Abu Al-Saadat Ibn Al-Atheer indicated in the introduction of his book *Al-Nihaya* and it is obvious to all who are well versed in history.

If we say that at the time every independent jurist[398] had to have studied Arabic, why should we stop at Abu Hanifa? This would necessitate that the scholars of Arabic must not use the poems of Jareer and Al-Frazdaq as a source, for they never studied Arabic grammar. No none would utter such a foolish statement. The language started losing its purity after this time (the era of the followers) for some of the people [who lived in big towns and intermingled with non-Arabs]. As for the country people, who did not mix with the foreigners, their language was preserved for a longer period. Al-Zamakhshari was a contemporary to these puritan Arabs and he followed them a long time in the desert [to learn pure Arabic]. He died in the sixth century in the year 538.

The scholar and ruler Al-Husain bin Muhammed said in his *Shifaa Al-Awaam* that Imaam Yahya bin Al-Husain (may Allah be pleased with him) was speaking Arabic with Hijaz dialect but did not study Arabic.

The eminent scholar of Shia Ali bin Abdullah bin Abi Al-Khayr narrates that he (Al-Imaam Yahya) studied Arabic for forty days and this happened at the start of the fourth century.

As for the year 80 [around the time of the birth of Abu Hanifa], no expert will think that people of that time won't be able to understand the word of Allah or the tradition of His Messenger (pbuh) without an explicit study of the Arabic grammar. If Arabic were a pre-requisite at that time, this would have been recorded in the books and we would have known who the prominent scholar of the Arabic language were among the followers.

Who were the Arabic teachers of Alqama bin Qays, Abu Muslim Al-Khawlani, Masrook Al-Ajda', Jaabir bin Nufair and Ka'b Al-Ahbar? Who were the forgotten Arabic teachers of those that followed them like Al-Hasan, Al-Shabi, Zayn Al-Aabideen, Ibraheem Al-Taymi, Al-Nakhai, Sa'd bin Jubair, Tawoos, Ataa, Mujaahid, Al-Shaabi and the like? Why is Abu Hanifa being singled out as the one who did not study Arabic grammar? What were the reference grammar books at the time?

As for him saying, "Bi Aba Qubays (making the word following the preposition accusative[399] instead of genitive[400], that is "Bi Abi Qubays")", one can approach this from various angles.

First: We must have an authentic narration from the Imaam that he said this. The objector, Al-Sayyid Jamladdeen Ali, is known to be strict with regards to the narrations in that each student in the chain must have heard from his teacher (according to the famous view) and that the narrator guards the text of the narration from the time he hears it until he narrates it to his students. Does he apply this strict rule to this narration [that Abu Hanifa said "Bi Aba Qubays"]?

Second: Even if we assume that this narration comes down to us through an authentic chain, clearly it is not commonly known or a famous narration in comparison to the innumerable narrations that he issued countless verdicts that he is an independent jurist[401] and that the Muslim nation has consensus regarding his knowledge, his virtues and his rank as independent jurist. How can we ignore the innumerable narrations and latch on to a solitary narration? Would this not be preferring doubt over a certain and definite knowledge?

Third: If we assume that he [Abu Hanifa] indeed said it and that it came down to us through an authentic famous narration, it [still] could not be used against him because this usage (i.e., making the noun that follows the proposition accusative) is correct and existed in the classical Arabic as Al-Farra used it in the following verse where he praises some Arabs:

Inaa Abaaha wa Abaa Abaaha[402] Qad balaqhaa fi Al-majdi ghayataha
(Verily their father and the father of their father have reached the pinnacle of glory)

Fourth: If we assume that this was a grammatical mistake, it does not indicate ignorance of the Imaam for many of the scholars use the common (spoken) language to facilitate the communication. Sometimes we see Arabs

398 mujtahid
399 mansoob
400 majroor
401 mujtahid mutlaq
402 Abaa Abaaha: The second word (Abaaha) is genitive (mudaaf ilayhi) and would normally be in genetive case (Abeeha) however the poet used it in accusative case (mansoob) indicating permissibility of such a usage in Classical Arabic.

speaking in foreign languages and this does not indicate their weakness in Arabic.

In summary, whatever the case maybe, it does not indicate the lack of knowledge of Arabic on the part of the Imaam. Rather it indicates the heedlessness of the objector and his audacity in accusing such an eminent scholar with ignorance and disgrace.

As for the criticism that he narrated hadith from the weak narrators, and their saying that this is only due to his lack of knowledge in the hadith science, it is a miserable delusion. No dignified person will talk like this. The answer to this accusation can be giving by the following points:

First Point: It is of the principle of the school of Abu Hanifa that he accepts narrations of unknown narrators[403]. This is the case for many scholars as we have already mentioned[404]. No doubt that they only accept the hadith of an unknown narrator if it doesn't contradict the hadith of the trustworthy, truthful, reliable and known narrators. This is because, giving weight to the addition of trustworthy narrator[405] in case there is a contradiction between different narrations, is a matter that is unanimously agreed upon.

Undoubtedly, majority of the carriers or the transmitter of the Prophetic tradition at that time were reliable and truthful narrators. The following famous hadith bears witness to this fact: "Best of you is the generation that I am in then those that follow the (followers) then those that will follow them (successors) and then the lies will spread"

Ali (RA) used to suspect the trustworthiness some of the narrators and he would make them swear before he accepted their narrations. This practice of Ali (ra) was with the unknown narrators[406] and the like not with the known ones. That is why he [Ali (ra)] accepted the narration of Al-Miqdaad regarding madhy without an oath.

The Hadith Master Ibn Katheer narrated in a paper where he collected narrations regarding racing[407] from Ahmad bin Hanbal that he permitted acting upon a hadith that has a weakness in it if there is no authentic hadith in t he subject at hand that refutes the former. Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbal narrated in his Musnad many a hadith in this category (i.e., containing weakness). This is on the part of the Imaam, to guard the hadith, just in case, not because he was ignorant of the weaknesses found in the hadith. Nor was he unaware of the different levels of weaknesses, some of which forbids the practice of hadith by the unanimous concensus of scholars and there is no differences among them.

The Hadith Master Abu Abdullah bin Mandah says: "Abu Dawood records in his book *Sunan* the hadith with weak chain if he doesn't find on a particular topic a hadith that is more authentic. This is because, for him, weak hadith is more prefrerable than the opinion of the scholars.

In what we have just said is [an unequivocal] proof that narrating a weak hadith does not necessarily and readily make the narrator ignorant of the hadith science for Ahmad bin Hanbel and Abu Dawood are the foremost experts in this field.

The weak hadith that they mention or narrate is not of the narrations of liars or perverted transgressors. The narrations of liers or perverted transgressoers don't deserve to be called a weak hadith. They should be called false[408], fabricated[409], leftout[410], fallen[411] or the like.

The weak hadith is a narration of a truthful narrator who is not 100% reliable in his ability to memorize the hadith verbatim, or he is know to present a stopped hadith[412] as raised[413] and has other similar shortcomings that made the scholars of hadith differ in declaring t he hadith problematic or the narrator as weak[414]. In this situation, there is no strong evidence to either accpt the hadith altogether or reject it at once.

Much of the declaration of hadith as weak comes due to the weakness in narrator's ability to memorize and maintain the text and nerrate it verbatim later. According to the scholars of principles of jurisprudence[415], this does not harm the narrator's reputation until his mistakes are equal to or exceed his correct narrations. If thet are equal, there is a difference among the scholars and the subject is treated at length in the books of principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

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403 majhool
404 Vol 1/20-26 in "Al-Rawd Al-Baasim"
405 ziyadat al-thiqa
406 majhool or man fihi jahaalah
407 ahaadith al-sibaaq
408 batil
409 mawdo'
410 matrook
411 saqit
412 mawqoof
413 marfoo'
414 majrooh
415 usool al-fiqh

Based on this, the narration of Abu Hanifa from some weak narrators is not out of ignorance but based on the principles of school and a conscience choice.

Second Point: That those from whom Abu Hanifa narrates, are not unanimously agreed upon as weak narrators. In that case according to the principles of his school, he is of the opinion that the narrators are not weak. As for the fact that he did not spell out his evidence regarding his reliance on those narrators is not unsusual among the scholars. This is the habit of the greatest of the scholars and the Hadith Masters. Even the authors of the two authentic collections of Bukhari and Muslim are not free of such practices. Such is the practice of the [rest of the] scholars of jurisprudence. Take for example Al-Imaam Al-Shafii (may Allah be pleased with him) who narrated many hadith from Ibrahim bin Abi Yahya Al-Aslami and he declared him as a trustworthy narrator[416]. In doing so, he differed with majority of the scholars. Ibn Abdulbar said in his *Tamweeh* that the scholars are unanimous about the weakness of Ibn Abi Yahya except Al-Shafii.

I would say that the statement [of Ibn Abdulbarr] that the scholars are unanimous about the weakness of Ibn Abi Yahya is not exact as four of the Hadith Masters agreed with Al-Shafii. They are Jurayj, Hammad bin Muhammed Al-Asbahani, Ibn Adi and Ibn Oqda.

Al-Dahabi said in his *Al-Tadhkira* that Ibn Abi Yahya wasn't of those that would fabricate[417] hadith.

However, for majority, he is weak. According to the Shafii hadith scholars his is not weak. These include Al-Nawawi, Al-Dhahabi, Ibn Katheer, Ibn Al-Nahwi, -who is the teacher of Ibn Hajar and is known as Ibn Al-Mulaqqin- and others.

Al-Shafii also narrates from Ibn Khaalid Al-Zinji Al-Makki about whose trustworthiness there is disagreement.

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbel narrates from a number of people that are disagreed upon.

Such is the case with Al-Qaasim bin Ibraahim and Yahya bin Al-Husain (may Allah be pleased with him) who has narrated from Ibn Abi Uways whose trustworthiness is a point of disagreement [among the scholars].

The experts of the science accreditation and criticism have explained in the books science of hadith what is acceptable and what is not of the statements of accreditation[418] and criticism[419] and different levels of authentication and enfeeblement and how to deal with if there are contradictory reports regarding a given narrator.

Third Point: That he had narrated from weak narrators by way of follow-up[420] and supporting narration[421]. He relied on other than these weak narrations like a general interpretation of a Qur'anic verse, a hadith, legal analogy[422] or other type of derivation[423] like what [Imaam] Malik did when he narrated from Abdulkareem bin Abi Al-Mukhariq Al-Basri regarding which Ibn Abdulbar says in *Al-Tamheed* that there was consensus that he was weak and Malik does not narrate from him except one hadith which is well known and came down through another path or chain which is regarding placing the right hand on the left while standing prayer. Malik narrates it in his *Al-Muwatta* through an authentic chain on the authority of eminent follower Abi Haazim from Shal bin Sa'd Al-Shaabi (may Allah be please with him).

In the same way, AlQaasim bin Ibraahim and his grandson Yahya bin Al-Husain from Zaydiyya School narrated many hadith from ibn Abi Damraand derived many rulings based on his narrations while the experts are unanimous about his weakness as narrator.

Similarly, Sho'ba, despite his eminence and strictness in narration, has taken from Abbaas bin Abi Ayyash even though he [Sho'ba] said that I prefer to drink from the urine of a donkey until I quench my thirst than take a hadith from Abbas bin Abi Ayyash [saying Abu Ayyash reported to us]. This is narrated from Sho'ba by Shoayb bin Hareer. Ibn Idrees and others narrated from Sho'ba who said: "That a man commit adultery is better than narrating the hadith of Abbas".

If you say, how did he narrate from him even though he believed that it is forbidden to narrate from him? I would say that this prohibition is regarding a narrator that is incapable of distinguishing between the narrations in that he is unable to separate out the truth from falsehood.

It also indicates the prohibition of a narration of a capable expert from the rejected narrators[424] in the presence of non-experts. Al-Thawri prohibited people from narrating the hadith of rejected or left out narrators and

416 thiqa
417 yada'
418 ta'deel
419 jarh
420 mutaaba'
421 istishhaad
422 qiyaas
423 istidlaal
424 matrookeen

he was told: "But don't you narrate from them yourself? [He said] I narrate from them what I know [to be verdict through a different narration]. And this is of the delicacies of the science of hadith.

The author of the authentic of Muslim may narrate a hadith through a weak chain due to the fact that and he leaves out the more authentic longer chain because it is a common knowledge that the hadith [in question] is authentic. Al-Nawawi narrates this form Muslim in writing. This is a proof enough that narration on the part of a Hadith Scholar of a hadith of a weak narrator does not necessariliy mean that the scholar was unaware of his weakness.

We see the same behavior on the part of Imaam Al-Bukhaari. He narrated hadith from some narrators in his authentic that he had declared them as weak. This is mentioned by Al-Dhahabi in his Al-Meezaan. This is a proof that he did not rely soley on the naaration of this narrator in including it in his authentic rather he had external evidence such as supporting narrations[425] or follow-up narration[426]. This is of the delicasies of the science of hadith.

Thus, AlImaam Al-Nawawi says that because of this, whoever declares a hadith authentic based soley on the chain being found in Muslim and assuming that the chain meets Muslim's criterion[427] he is dellusional.

Fourth Point: That Abu Hanifa narrates what came to him, be it weak or authentic, in order to preserve all the all the narrations as was done by many of the authors of the hadith books such as the Sunan and Masaanid. Their purpose was to record everything so that the experts would look at each and every narration in search of supporting narrations as well as follow-ups[428] and at the end if it turns out to be authentic (on its own or by way of external evidence) it would be practiced and if it turns out to be fabricated, they would warn the people not to act upon it. If the research did not yield a conclusive result, and there were differences of opinion, the jurist or the Hadith Master would evaluate the body of evidence and issue his own verdict.

In a famous narration, Al-Bukhari had memorized 300,00 hadith of which 100,000 were weak narrations.

Ishaaq bin Rahuwyah said: "I memorized the location of 100,000 hadith as if I am looking at them. I memorized 70,000 hadith by heart. I also memorized 4000 fabricated hadith. He was asked why he memorized the counterfit (false) hadith? He said: "So that if I come across any one of those maong the authentic narrations I would scrutinize (and make sure that it won't escape me).

Fifthe Point: That many of the hadith attributed to Imaam Abu Hanifa are weak due to those that came after him in the chain, not due to him or his teachers or those before them. This is the case for many of the hadith attributed to Ja'fer Al-Saadiq abd mnany of the trustworthy[429] hadith narrators.

AlImaam AlDahabi narrates in Al-Meezaan from the Hadith Master Ibn Hibbaan that Abaan bin Jaa'fer[430] fabricated 300 hadith that he claimed were from Abu Hanifa's narrations but the fact of the matter is that for of a surety Abu Hanifa never narrated even a single one of these hadith. This is found in the biography of Abaan bin Ja'fer by Al-Dhahabi.

If you have understood the aforementioned points, know also that Al_imaam Abu Hanifa (may Allah be pleased with him) started his studies late[431]. This profession is very demanding on the memory and the older the person is the weaker his memory will be. Thus his memory wasn't among those of the highest level. Such was the case for some of the other independent jurists except Al-Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbel who memorized most hadith among the independent jurists. However, not having the very best memory -comparable to the most eminent hadith masters- is not a shortcoming for someone who is an independent jurist (mujtahid mutlaq) nor does this overshadow his independent judments in any way.

The narrations of Ibn AlMusayyab, Muhammed bin Seerin and Ibraheem Al-Nakaai were stronger and more authentic than those of Ataa, Al-Hasan AlBasri, Abu Qilaba and Abu AlAliya. Ibn Al-Musayyab's hadith was the strongest among them and this statement doesn't imply or indicate any sort of shortcoming regarding the narrations of others that are less authentic than his.

Because of this, some of the hadith masters talked about the narratinos of Abu Hanifa and some ignoramious thought this disqualifies him from being an independent jurist[432] or from being an Eponym (leader of a school of thought). It is not the case at all. The worst that can be said that there were others who were stronger in hadith

425 shawaahed

426 mutabaa'

427 ala shartihi

428 al-tawaabi'

429 thiqaat

430 He is also refrred to as Aba bin Jaafar Al-Najiraami

431 We have already mentioned on page 24 from Al-Dhahabi that Abu Hanifa studied hadith after the year 100 when he was 20 years old. This is the authentic view based on the opinion that he was born in the year 80. Ibn Al-Wazeer here goes with the view that he was born in the year 61.

432 mujtahid

memorization than Abu Hanifa. This doesn't necessitate ta all that others were more knowledgeable or better than him. Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) memorized the most hadith among the companions, yet he wasn't the most knowledgable nor was he the most proficient in jurisprudence nor was he the best in general. Rather, Muaz (ra) was the most profocoent in jurisprudence, Zaid (ra) was the most knowledgable in regard to the laws of inheritance, Ali (ra) was the most knowlegable in judging [between people], Ubay (ra) was the most knowladgable in Qur'an recitation and the 4 caliphs were best of the companions in general but thereafter they were ranked as the Almighty wished for he bestows whatever he wishes on whomever he wishes.

Al-Dhahabi excused himself for mentioning Abu Hanifa and his peers and that this should in no way constitute slander or defamation that he recorded various opinions about him in his book. He says in the introduction of his Al-Mizaan: "In the same way I do not mention any of the independent jurists (aimmat Al-matbooi'na fi Al-foroo') for their distinguished position in Islam and for the love and respect that Muslims have for them. If I mentioned any one of them I will be just and balanced. This will not be against them in any way nor can it change their position in the sight of Allah or people. What harms people is the falsehood and lies and insisting upon lies and continuous mistakes.

In addition, what harms people is to present falsehood as truth [to mislead the masses] for it is a betrayal and crime. Muslims can do anything but lying and betrayel[433]. Look at the beautiful manners of Al-Dhahabi. He mentions the scholars of highest eminance, the independent jurists and adds immediately that making their mention in this book of accreditation and critisizm doesn't imply for them any sort of defame whatsoever. This is how a scholar should treat someone who is more knowledgable than him with humility, exaltation, respect, and reverence. May Allah make us all understand the value and the status of our eminent scholars and protect us from going against what the Islamic nation agreed upon.

With this we have completed the refutation of the two doubts regarding the knowledge of one of the foremost scholars of Islam about whom the most knowledgable scholars of the nation have concensus that he is one of the independent jurists.

I wanted to attain nearness to Allah sw and to be honored by being at the service of this great imam by sharing his virtues and defending his status as a man of abundant knowledge by writing these few unworthy lines and I did not intend to describe someone whose status and virtues are unknown nor did I intend to elevate him for he is already of high status and exalted reputation.

This is the end of what Ibn Al-Wazir had written. In his writing and in the writings of the other masters that we have quoted of the later generation scholars of the malilki, Shafi, Hambali schools, and others we find their veneration and praises of Abu Hanifa for his most valuable work on the book of Allah and the tradition of his messenger and their refutation of those who declared the imam weak or faulted him. They responded with proofs and brilliant evidences. In so doing they even refuted the prejudeced unfair opponents of the imam in recent times.

In all of these we find what should lift the curtain from the eyes of the prejudice and what should cure their ill stricken sould if their guidance and success [in this world and in the world to come] is in their destiny. In all of these we find what should make happy the students of knowledge upon whom Allah sw bestowed good manners towards the eminent scholars of Islam (May Allah be pleased with all of them)

I plead to Allah sw that he should benefint everyone that reads this book or comes across it and enable me to do more in clarifying to the people the status and rank of their prominent scholars out of his grace and bounty. He is the sole donator of success and well capable of answering of answering the call of a caller. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our master and prophet Muhammed and upon his family, his companions all of them. All praise is due to Allah the lord of the worlds. Written by Muhammed Abd Al-Rasheed Al-Noomani (May Allah have Mercy on him)

15 Rabi' Al-awwal 1415 Karatchi

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433 The biography of Al-Imaam Abu Hnaifa in some v ersion of "Al-Mizaan" are tempered with and interpolated as I pointed out in "Al-Imaam Ibn Maja wa Kitabhu Al-Sunan". It was also pointed out with evidence and testimonial proofs by the eminent scholar of hadith Abdulfattah Abu Ghudda (may Allah have mercy on his soul) in his edition of the book "Al-Rafi wa Al-Takmeel fi Al-Jarhi wa Al-Ta'deel" pages 121-126 in the second print. The interpolated biography for sure is not fair and Al-Dhahabi made a promise that he will be fair when he makes a mention of the independent jurists (aimmat Al-matbooeen). If the reader compares this biography with what Al-Dhahbi has in his "Tadhkiraat Al-Huffadz", "Tadheeb Al-Tadheeb" and "Siyar aalaam Al-Nubelaa", he will se a deifference between them like heavens and the earth. On page 87 we quoted the Imaams short biography from Al-Dhabi's "Tadheeb Al-Tadheeb" just as we have quoted passages from Al-Dhahbi's "Siyar Aa'lam Al-Nubelaa" that are filled with his praises of the Imaam (may Allah be pleased with him). Whoever reads these passages from "Siyar Aalam Al-Nubelaaa" and that which is found "Al-Tadheeb", he will have certeanity that what is in Al-Mizaan is tempered with and interpolated. The apology of Ibn Al-Wazeer regarding the short biography of the Imaam in "Al-Meezan" would have been unnecessary had he had access to the original uninterpolated version of "Al-Mizaan". Ibn Al-Wazeer himself complain in his "Al-Awaasim wa Al-Qawaasim" about his lack of accessto the books of hadith scholars.

The weak slave of Allah, Abd Al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah, may Allah forgive him and his teachers and his parents, says “I completed editing this book “Abu Hanifa and Hadith” to the best of my ability 1 Zulhijjah 1415 in Riyad. All praise is due to Allah and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our master prophet Muhammed, upon his family, and his companions.

Glossary

Eponym: An independent jurist who has a school of though named after him like the 4 Imaams of Abu Hanifa, Malik, Al-Shafii and Ahmad bin Hanbel.

(ra): radiya Allahu anhu (may Allah be pleased with him)

(SW): subhanahu wa taala (Glorified and Exalted be He (Allah))

(pbuh): Peace be upon him

Raised hadith[434] (**hadith marfoo'**): The term "raised" applies exclusively to the hadith attributed to the Messenger of Alllah (pbuh) and it does not apply, when used without qualification, to anything else.

Stopped/Halted hadith[435] (**hadith mawqoof**): The halted hadith is the one which is transmitted from the Companions (ra) concerning their words, deeds and the like and which is stopped at them and is not carried past to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

434 An Introduction to the Science of Hadith (English translation of Muqaddimat Ibn Al-Saalah by Dr. Eeerick Dickenson). Page 33.

435 An Introduction to the Science of Hadith (English translation of Muqaddimat Ibn Al-Saalah by Dr. Eeerick Dickenson). Page 34.